

DAY OF ACTION FOR PALESTINE SATURDAY 12 APRIL

See stopwar.org.uk for details ● Truth about so-called 'anti-Hamas' protests in Gaza >>Page 4

Socialist Worker

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After 2,000-strong Summit of Resistance



PEOPLE PACKED into the opening session of the summit to hear speakers, including Independent MP Jeremy Corbyn and left wing economist Grace Blakeley

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

'WE CAN BEAT STARMER AND FAR RIGHT'

Full report of the event —plus what comes next

>>Pages 5 and 8&9

Build resistance and solidarity in every town and city

TURKEY

A new mood for change on streets

MASS PROTESTS have erupted across Turkey following the arrest of opposition leader and Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu.

Turkey's history is key to understanding what forces are in play today.

Revolutionary socialist Eren spoke to Socialist Worker about the roots of the uprising and the ongoing crisis facing Turkey's ruling class.

>>Pages 10&11

LABOUR



Disability cuts are class war

CHANCELLOR Rachel Reeves has declared open class war on us all with her vicious attacks on benefits.

As Labour funnels money into arms, she is facing a wave of anger. Ellen Morrison-Smith from Disabled People Against Cuts said, "We didn't vote for this. We are angry, we are organised and we are not going away."

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FRANCE

Le Pen banned from elections

FASCIST MARINE Le Pen has been barred from public office for five years.

It was met with celebration. Anti-racist Denis Godard told Socialist Worker, "Le Pen was not prosecuted for what she should be—being a fascist. The only justice will come from our class—we will smash the fascist RN party."

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'If you have a 16 year-old and you say, "You know what I'm not going to give you so much pocket money. I want you to go out to work"'

Treasury secretary **Darren Jones** thinks that Personal Independence Payment for sick and disabled people is like 'pocket money'

'How will making people sicker and poorer help to drive our economy up and get people into jobs?'

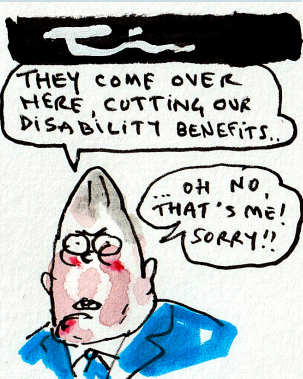
Debbie Abrahams MP, the Labour chair of the work and pensions select committee

'Absolutely certain'

Chancellor **Rachel Reeves** insists her cuts will not push more people into poverty—despite official statistics from her Treasury department proving that they will

'That will be me homeless. There's no softening that blow. That's quite terrifying'

40 year-old man with a brain injury confronts chancellor **Rachel Reeves** over benefit cuts that could leave him destitute



Unelected and often wrong, but with power to upturn chancellors

by YURI PRASAD

JUST WHO runs the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the so-called financial "watchdog" whose predictions can make or ruin a government?

It was the OBR that last week insisted that chancellor **Rachel Reeves**'s disability cuts didn't go far enough and that still more lives must be sacrificed. Reeves, or course, complied.

The powerful but unelected OBR is far from neutral and independent.

It is chaired by **Richard Hughes**, a neoliberal economist. He has worked for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose cuts and privatisation programmes ravaged the Global South.

Hughes sits on the all-powerful, three person Budget Responsibility Committee with **David Miles**.

Miles was the top economist at bankers **Morgan Stanley** during the great



THE OBR pushed chancellor **Rachel Reeves** for even bigger cuts

financial crash of 2007-9, during which his bank faced potential collapse.

Forced

It lost over 80 percent of its market value and was forced to run cap-in-hand to the Treasury, so that the public could bail it out.

That's the same state that **Miles** and his monetarist

friends had long wanted cut down to size.

Thankfully, the experience of the slump doesn't seem to have affected **Miles**'s career.

When not doing the OBR's work of enforcing neoliberalism on governments in Britain, **Miles** is also doing the same in Ireland, where he helps run the central bank.

Also on the Committee is **Tom Josephs**, who also cut his teeth at the globally despised IMF, where he "advised" governments in Africa and the Middle East.

During his time there the IMF recommended structural adjustment programmes—the economic equivalent of Medieval "medical" leaches.

The IMF pushed spending cuts, tax rises and privatisation on already weak economies.

With these monetarist superbrains at the helm, is it any wonder that the OBR's hallowed forecasts are regularly proved wrong?

In 2023, for example, the OBR was forced to admit "genuine errors" in its predictions as it persistently missed the huge spike in prices and grossly overestimated economic growth.

In reality, the OBR's "economic forecasts" are political interventions into government on the side of free market economics.

Polly Toynbee—Labour's soothsayer gone wrong

VETERAN newspaper columnists, we are told, are paid big money because of their unique "insights" into political life.

Really? Well, someone at the Guardian should be asking leading opinion writer **Polly Toynbee** for their money back.

After last year's landslide general election win for Labour, the headline on **Toynbee**'s column happily predicted, "Starmer will bin the two-child benefit cap and outdo New Labour on tackling poverty—I'll bet on it."

Alternative

Yet by the time of the chancellor's Spring Statement, her piece was titled, "Dear **Rachel Reeves**: if there is no alternative to cuts, at least do them with care."

Now, after one of the



Toynbee—usually wrong

biggest ever assaults on the welfare state by a Labour government, the former Liberal Democrat can only sigh.

"Investing in warfare with money stolen from welfare will never be forgotten or forgiven," she wrote last week.

"Wheelchairs beaten into armaments will be an abiding image that may stay with this government."

Quite right, **Polly**. If only someone with a newspaper column had predicted such an outcome.

When 'touching distance' is miles off

CHANCELLOR Reeves made much of being "within touching distance" of her party's pledge to build 1.5 million homes in England while in office.

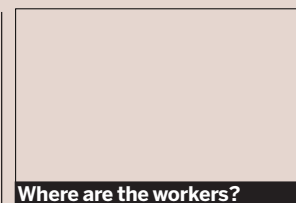
This, Labour says, will "make a dent" in the housing crisis.

But the latest projections show that Labour is set to miss its target by at least 200,000 homes.

Fail

Noble Francis, economics director at the Construction Products Association (CPA), said that "the government will fail to meet its target by around 50 percent—and even that is assuming strong growth".

One reason for the failure is that there



Where are the workers?

simply aren't enough skilled workers to build them. That's despite Labour's announcement of funding to train a further 60,000 new workers.

A recent report said the construction sector would need over 250,000 extra workers just to meet demand until 2028—and that's without Labour's 1.5 million home target.

Once overseas workers would have helped. But Labour's pandering to racism has now bricked up that route.

Hang up the phone. The police are calling

THE APPARENTLY endless series of revelations of "bad apples" among serving police officers continues.

A Metropolitan Police officer was dismissed last week after an inquiry found he had texted escorts and sex workers on his work phone.

PC Shabul Miah sent messages to "a large number" of different phone numbers linked to escort workers and sex worker websites last year.

Some of the messages were sent on the Met-issued device while he was on duty.

Assistant Commissioner **Laurence Taylor**, chair of the panel, said **PC Miah**'s behaviour could have led to him "exploiting a vulnerable individual or funding organised crime" and left him at risk of being blackmailed.

With cases of disgraced cops continuing at pace, isn't it about time the government admitted the whole police barrel is rotten?

All cancer patients should get benefits if they stop work

GIVEN HOW keen Labour is to get even desperately sick people into work, it's surprising that ministers have stayed silent on **King Charles's** absence from work recently.

The king, like millions of other people in Britain, lives with cancer and the sometimes devastating effects of treatment.

So, instead of touring the world cutting ribbons, **Charles** is putting his feet up.

No such treatment for mere mortals, unfortunately.

The Department for Work and Pensions routinely denies its Personal Independence Payment (Pip) for thousands of cancer patients.

And the cuts announced this month can only make that situation far worse.

Recent data shows nearly one in five applicants with cancer are rejected—including nearly half of those with testicular cancer, a third of those with prostate cancer and 30 percent of those with bladder cancer.

Those refused benefits are forced into a life of extreme poverty or into jobs that further endanger their health.

That's not a problem that the king is likely to face given that he is worth a staggering £1.8 billion.

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Starmmer declares class war with disability cuts

by CAMILLA ROYLE

CHANCELLOR RACHEL Reeves has declared open class war on us all with her vicious attacks on benefits.

But she is facing a wave of anger. And the backlash on the streets is driving divisions in Labour as MPs prepare to vote on the “welfare reforms” by July.

Mark Dunk from Disabled People Against Cuts (Dpac) said, “If they keep cutting, we’ll keep fighting.”

Reeves’s plans unveiled last week involve cuts to the health element of universal credit for new claimants and freezing it for existing claimants.

And she wants to make it even more difficult for disabled people to claim Personal Independence Payments (Pip).

Even the government’s own estimates say this will drive 250,000 more people—including 50,000 children—into poverty.

At the same time, it is choosing to hand another £2.2 billion to the generals and arms companies.

Provided

Hundreds of disabled people and their supporters blocked traffic in Westminster in central London last Wednesday before Reeves’s Spring Statement.

Protester Jen, who is autistic and has an autistic son, said, “Every government comes for disabled people.”

“I can’t get my head around how they can take from the disabled and give money for warfare.”

Kira told Socialist Worker, “I have only just been able to get housing and I have to carry my wheelchair up the stairs.”

“That’s what the council provided me. It was either that or live in a hotel. It’s all the same struggle—disability, housing and war.”



DISABLED PEOPLE Against Cuts (Dpac) protest against the Spring Statement

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Sarah Kilpatrick from the NEU education union told the rally, “In 2010 I was my father’s carer. He was utterly failed by a system that does not care.”

“There is no way that my dad would have thought that the Labour Party would bring us here.”

“And yet here we are outside Downing Street while they debate what our lives are worth.”

In Glasgow, protesters rallied at

the Ministry of Defence offices to call for money for welfare, not warfare.

Disability campaigner Euan said, “Disabled people, migrants, refugees and carers did not cause the economic crisis—stealing their life-line will not solve it.”

The attack on disabled people marks a watershed for the Labour government as it stands exposed in the eyes of millions of working class people.

Some unions who had previously defended the Starmmer government came out against the attacks on disabled people.

But it will take grassroots trade unionists organising at the base to push union leaders to lead a fight.

Ellen Morrison-Smith from Dpac told the crowd in London, “We didn’t vote for this.”

“We are angry, we are organised and we are not going away.”

Yvette Cooper’s fresh attacks

LABOUR HOME secretary Yvette Cooper announced that she is launching a review into the Human Rights Act, which gives refugees the right to a family life, on Sunday.

Prime minister Keir Starmer denounced this human right as a “loophole”. The Human Rights Act protects everyone’s right to a private and family life.

It includes the right not to be separated from your children. This has been used to stop the state deporting refugees.

The Human Rights Act has long been a target of far right politicians and right wing newspapers.

Cooper is spreading the

same scaremongering and lies about refugees. On Sunday she announced that she would “turn off the tap” of jobs by cracking down on bosses who hire workers without the correct visa status.

Businesses could be fined up to £60,000, or face closures, director disqualifications and up to five years in prison.

Cooper brags about a 40 percent increase in raids on workplaces since the election.

And she brags about deporting people.

She is also threatening to crackdown on people who have arrived in Britain on a student or work visa and have since claimed asylum.

Election delivers blow to Labour

VOTERS HAVE given the Labour Party another bloody nose—this time in Redbridge, east London.

Noor Jahan Begum, the Ilford Independents candidate, won with 43 percent of the vote in a by election to Redbridge council on Friday of last week.

The Labour Party’s vote tumbled from 48 percent to 26 percent.

The election in Mayfield ward was triggered after Jas Athwal—slum landlord and right wing Labour MP—resigned as councillor.

Vaseem Ahmed, chair of the Redbridge and Ilford Independents, said, “Labour suffered its worst local election defeat in Redbridge for over a decade.”

“Together, we defeated



On the campaign trail

the politics that thinks it can, with total impunity, attack our NHS and cut benefits to the poorest in society, including the disabled and old age pensioners.”

Thousands of people in Redbridge broke with Labour in last year’s general election over the party’s support for Israel’s genocide.

This, alongside a deep hatred of Athwal, means people turned out for the Independents.

Athwal is the biggest landlord in the House of Commons. A BBC investigation in September found he rents out moldy and ant-infested properties with fire alarms dangling from the ceilings.

Miriam is Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) supporter and socialist in east London who campaigned for Begum. She told Socialist Worker that “Palestine was a massive factor” behind people wanting to punish Labour.

Ben, an NEU education union member in Redbridge, was also on the doorstep campaigning for Begum. He told Socialist Worker, “No one would say a word in defence of Labour when we talked about disability cuts winter fuel allowance or Gaza.”

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Anti-protest cops raid church meet —but we can fight back

by JUDY COX

THE BRITISH state ramped up repression against political activists last week.

In a major escalation, the cops arrested nine activists from the Youth Demand organisation last Thursday and Friday.

At around 7.30pm, over 30 Metropolitan Police officers crashed into a Youth Demand “Welcome Talk” at the Quaker Meeting House in Westminster.

They arrested six people, including one person attending their first meeting, and a journalist.

Police said that they were arresting people for conspiracy to cause public nuisance.

But the welcome talks are a space where people can talk about the genocide in Gaza, the accelerating climate crisis and plans for non-violent actions.

In a separate incident, police arrested Youth Demand supporter Eddie Whittingham at home in Exeter. Eddie has since been released without charge.

Police also arrested two other supporters at unknown locations.

A Youth Demand spokesperson said, “There are thousands of young people who are horrified by what the government is doing to facilitate genocide and who know that they have been betrayed as their future is fucked.



From the streets to the custody suite

BACK STORY

Who are the Youth Demand group raided by police?

- Youth Demand is a campaign centred on Palestine solidarity and climate crisis activism
- It began life as an offshoot from direct action group Just Stop Oil
- Activists are fighting for an end to North Sea oil drilling and no more British arms exports to Israel

“We will not be silenced. Young people all over the country are coming together to shut London down day after day throughout April.

“We refuse to be ruled by liars and war criminals. We will not let them get away with it. We refuse to be ignored. It’s time for young people to take to the streets day after day and shut London down.

Standstill

“Only sustained mass resistance can put an end to genocide. By standing together we can grind the murder machine to a standstill.”

One of those arrested and released was student Ella Grace-Taylor.

They said, “Our politicians will stand by as police engage in mass arrests and imprisonment of anyone who speaks out.

“By arming Israel and refusing to call what is happening a genocide, they are perpetrating mass slaughter.

“We won’t stop saying it. We won’t be intimidated.”

Youth Demand says that “repression means the state is nervous and that means we are winning. So we will not back down.”

The British state is ramping up repression against the Palestine solidarity movement.

The Labour government indicated last week that it will introduce an amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill to further restrict the right to protest.

The best way to defend the right to protest is by using it through mass mobilisations.

VICTIMS OF an Israeli air strikes are laid to rest in Khan Younis

Anger and desperation at Israeli occupation main driver of protests

ISRAEL IS escalating mass slaughter in Gaza yet again. It chose to target Palestinians during the holiday Eid al-Fitr last weekend.

The terror state killed at least a dozen in its latest bombardment.

In Rafah and Khan Younis in Gaza, Israel murdered at least 35 people, and it continues to block any aid from entering Gaza in its weeks-long siege.

The latest bombardment came as the bodies of 15 medical workers, slaughtered in an earlier attack, were recovered in Rafah.

Israel’s terror has created an explosion of anger in Gaza. Primarily in Khan Yunis and Beit Lahia, hundreds of Gazans have rallied daily in protests that began last week.

Contradictory

Western media initially described them as “anti-Hamas” protests, and Israeli forces declared they were clear calls for the resistance group to relinquish power.

The reality was more contradictory. Organiser Saad told Al Jazeera news that they

A protest in Cairo, Egypt was covered in Palestinian flags

were triggered by recent Israeli eviction orders.

“The people’s demands stem from an unbearable reality—if ending the war requires Hamas to step aside, then so be it.

“Whether we agree or disagree with Hamas, they’re ultimately part of our people.”

Mahmoud al-Haj Ahmed, a doctor at Kamal Adwan Hospital, told the Middle Eastern Eye website, “We need humanitarian aid. We need border crossings to open. We need a dignified life.”

And protester Waseem Abdel Nabi said, “Hamas is one of the

reasons for the outbreak of the war, but it is not the primary reason. The main reason is the Israeli occupation.”

While some people in Gaza want Hamas to stand aside, many others came on to the streets to cheer them just weeks ago.

As Israeli-held prisoners were returned to Gaza, there was a huge outpouring of support for the resistance group.

Making concessions to Israel won’t improve life in Gaza. A further ceasefire seems unlikely, despite Egypt and Qatar putting forward a renewed proposal.

Hamas has agreed to release five Israeli hostages every week in return for a 50-day ceasefire.

But on Sunday, Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu lay down its arms to “enable the implementation of the Trump plan”. Hamas has repeatedly said laying down arms is a “red line” it will not cross.

Israel is using bombs and starvation to pressure both the people and Hamas into agreeing to deal that will hand more power to the occupation.

Arthur Townend

Theatrics and racism—inside Reform UK rally

by THOMAS FOSTER

TWEED JACKETS. Make Britain Great Again hats. People chanting, “Send them back.” Nigel Farage arriving on a JCB digger. These were the scenes at Reform UK’s rally in Birmingham on Friday of last week.

It was the launch of Reform UK’s council and mayoral campaigns for 1 May—and it was a masterclass in Farage’s far right strategy.

He latches onto people’s anger at years of neoliberalism and austerity hammering them.

But opposition to “mass” and “illegal” immigration is the glue that binds together Reform UK’s story of Britain’s “national decline”.

Farage proudly stated he was the first to call refugees “an invasion of our country”. “Everyone who comes illegally will be deported,” he said—and got the biggest standing ovation of the night.

Reform UK supporters whooped, cheered and stomped their feet. Chants of “Nigel, Nigel, Nigel,” spontaneously rang out through the arena.

One attendee from Coventry said, “We are normal people with normal views”—and complained about the “tremendous number of illegals”.

Another said that Rishi Sunak was a bad prime minister because he “wasn’t really British”—his friend boomed with laughter.

In one of Britain’s most multi-cultural cities, the rally was largely male, pale and stale.

Reform UK uses racist divide and rule to push the class interests that Farage, a former public school boy and stockbroker, serves.

Banker

One Reform UK supporter told Socialist Worker, “Farage used to be a banker and a businessman, that’s why I like him, that’s what we need.”

Farage said taxes in Britain are too high, but especially on the rich. He complained, “10,000 millionaires left” the country.

The second biggest response of the night was to Farage saying, “We will abolish inheritance tax.”

Farage argued that to pay for the “big tax cuts that people deserve and need, we need a British form of DOGE”—Elon Musk’s US Department for Government Efficiency.

The promise of tax cuts was also laced with anti-migrant racism. Farage highlighted councils paying for translation services for asylum seekers as “waste”.

“When we win these county councils, we’ll send in the auditors, we’ll get rid of the fraudulent contracts, we’ll cut spending,” he said.

The night was full of theatrics. A set of a high street had been built around the centre stage. There was a barbers called Keir’s Kutz with a tagline, “Cutting everything.”

A cinema showing, “Tax me if you can,” starring “Free Gear



REFORM UK challenged—over 500 rally on a Stand Up To Racism counter-demonstration (above) Farage spewing far right bile in Birmingham (left)

politics”—Muslims daring to speak out over Palestine—was caused “by Labour and Tory governments allowing mass immigration without integration”.

People shouted from the floor, “Send them back.”

Reform UK MP Lee Anderson claimed, “There is no such thing as Islamophobia. It is a made up word by Labour politicians.”

Threat

Reform UK is a major threat—but it isn’t an unstoppable juggernaut.

The event was billed as the “biggest political conference in Britain since the Second World War”. It wasn’t. The 15,800 capacity arena was less than half full, making attendance around 7,000 people.

Farage was rattled this week when anti-racists disrupted his rally in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. He shouted, “Boring, boring,” “Saddo,” and, “Haven’t you got a job to go to?”

Supporters of Stand Up To Racism are organising against Reform UK in the run-up to the local elections and Runcorn by-election on 1 May.

Calling out Farage and Co as racist—and taking on the myths about immigration—is vital to pushing back the far right party.

Keir”. A betting shop relabelled “Labourbros” with adverts of “Starmer’s sack race”.

And rubbish had been brought in and put next to the stage—a reference to the ongoing Birmingham bin strike against council bosses pushing austerity.

Sometimes Farage and his mates pretend to oppose Labour’s austerity drive.

But in Birmingham he suggested that welfare cuts should go much further than Starmer’s vicious assault on disability benefits.

“Rather than the benefits going up to £100 billion a year in three years’ time, it might only go up to £95 billion,” he said. “I don’t think that deals with it.”

Farage turned his fire on the left and Palestine solidarity movements. “The really big threat to Labour comes from a group that called themselves the Gaza Independents.”

He argued that “sectarian

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

SEIZE THE TIME, BUILD WE DEMAND CHANGE

THE SUMMIT of Resistance last week was step forward for the whole of the left. Over 2,000 people came together in London to discuss how to take the fight to the Labour government and resist the far right (see report pages 8&9).

People came for many reasons, from Labour’s attacks on disabled people and the cost of living crisis to its support for Israel’s genocide.

But they were united in wanting an alternative to Keir Starmer and the far right Reform UK party that his betrayals fuel.

There was a sense of optimism and unity on the day—but the event marked a starting point. Now we need to spread the spirit and organisation to every town and city.

How can you bring together the fightbacks in your area?

Imagine if there were We Demand Change summits across Britain that brought together everyone who wants resistance.

It could unite the Palestine and anti-racist movements, disability and housing campaigners, striking workers and trade unionists and all those who want an alternative. And it could become a local focal point for working class people who are fed up with Labour’s betrayals.

These summit could organise action. That could mean targeting the offices of MPs who support benefit cuts or arms companies supplying Israel, or lobbying the council for divestment.

Think what a step forward it would be if there was a network that linked together the different movements, campaigns and trade unionists where you are.

Imagine if MPs and councils knew that, if they tried to push through austerity, they would always be faced with angry protests.

Imagine if every group of workers that went on strike had the solidarity of a mass movement behind them.

And imagine if there were independent socialist candidates—who championed struggle in the streets and workplaces—to vote for instead of Labour.

The Summit of Resistance opens up important opportunities. If we’re to seize them, we have to move quickly to organise struggles on the streets, picket lines and campuses.

HOW NOT TO FIGHT REFORM UK

WE CAN respond to the rise of Reform UK in three ways—one is disastrous, the second is wishful thinking, the third has a chance of success.

Firstly, the left can adapt to racist ideas in the hope of neutralising the threat of the far right.

This means giving ground to the idea that immigration is a “problem” that puts “pressure” on working class communities.

In reality, that only legitimises right wing ideas. We saw that this week with the Labour Party’s latest ad campaign. It put out a poster boasting, “Over 24,000 people with no right to be in the UK removed by this Labour government.”

Secondly, the left can try to fight Reform UK by ignoring its racism.

This is the approach of the majority of the trade union leaders. They rightly point out that Farage and the other Reform UK MPs voted against the Employment Rights Bill and that it wants to privatise the NHS. But they shy away from taking on the anti-migrant arguments.

But the far right wraps racism around every issue it toys with, laying blame at the feet of migrants and refugees.

It’s true that calling Reform UK racist will not alone stop people voting for the party—although it’s vital to do so. But a major reason for this is that, in the heads of many people, opposition to migrants and refugees is divorced from racism.

It’s easy to think or say, “Being against more migrants is not racist,” when every major party agrees on clamping down on them.

So we need a third approach—mass anti-racist campaigning against Reform UK that takes on the myths around immigration. “Blame bosses, not migrants” is a crucial slogan. We have to argue that scapegoating refugees and migrants weakens the whole working class—and strengthens the rich minority ripping us all off.

Go to standuptoracism.org.uk

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Trump uses tariffs to keep his friends close

STOCK MARKETS soared—especially in the United States—when Donald Trump was re-elected in November.

But they were in free fall ahead of what he calls “liberation day” on Wednesday. That’s when he promised to slap tariffs on imports from all countries that treat the US “unfairly”.

Tariffs are taxes on imports. There’s widespread fear that they will disrupt international trade and increase inflation.

But Trump actively wants international disruption. As Financial Times columnist Rana Foroohar puts it, “It is all about being able to project power and strength, which are the things—aside from wealth—that motivate him.”

Wealth is a source of state power, so the picture is a bit more complex. The most coherent justification for the Trump tariffs that I’ve found comes from a long paper by the economist Stephen Miran, currently chair of Trump’s Council of Economic Advisers.

Miran argues that the US economy suffers from a competitive disadvantage because the dollar is the main reserve currency. This means that capitalists from all over the world invest in US Treasury bonds because they are a safe and reliable asset.

This keeps the dollar strong relative to other currencies. As a result, manufacturing industry in the US has shrunk compared to that of China and Europe.

Trump, like Joe Biden, wants to rebuild manufacturing in the US. One way to do this would be to weaken the dollar against other currencies in order to make US exports cheaper internationally. Miran even comes up with a plan for a “Mar-a-Lago Accord” under which Washington would bully other leading capitalist states into helping to devalue the dollar.

But Trump likes the strong dollar. It helps to keep the US at the centre of the global financial system. Miran recently told the Bloomberg website that weakening the dollar isn’t a priority for the Trump administration.

Imports

The alternative, then, is to make imports more expensive by imposing tariffs. Whether this would increase inflation is an open question. Miran points out that when Trump first imposed tariffs on China in 2018, the Chinese currency—the renminbi—fell against the dollar.

This offset the impact of higher tariffs on US consumers by making Chinese imports cheaper, in the process cutting Chinese workers’ purchasing power. If this reasoning is correct—which depends on lots of other ifs—Trump’s tariffs will increase US tax revenues at the expense of the rest of the world.

Raising more money is very important to the administration. One reason why the markets soared when Trump won was that he promised to continue the tax cut for the rich that he introduced in his first presidential term.

The tax cut is due to expire next year. Extending it would cost £3 trillion over ten years. But—partly because the strong dollar makes it easy for the US to borrow—government debt is massive. The federal budget deficit—the difference between what the US government spends and what it receives in taxes—is projected to be nearly £1.5 trillion in 2025, 6.2 percent of national income.

Borrowing to pay for the tax cut would push up interest rates, which are already rising. Elon Musk’s slash and burn cuts to government spending are a desperate effort to cut the deficit. Trump’s team are counting on the revenues from the tariffs to bring the books more into balance.

So the tariffs are partly about buying the continued silence of the corporate rich at the authoritarian and racist rampage the administration is mounting. They’re also about strengthening US imperialism against its rivals. Miran wants to tie together tariffs and geopolitics.

He says, “Friends are inside the security and economic umbrella, but there is much more burden-sharing. Based on the scope of that burden-sharing, friends may experience more favourable trade or currency terms.”

“Those outside the security umbrella may also find themselves outside friendly arrangements for international trade and easy access to the US consumer.”

This is a recipe for a Fortress America with space for compliant allies who increase their defence spending. Who does that remind me of?

LETTERS

Email letters@socialistworker.co.uk Post Socialist Worker, PO Box 74955, London E16 9EJ

Scrapping NHS England will be bad for patients’ care

I AGREE with Kambiz Boomla (12 March) that few health workers will mourn the passing of the NHS England (NHSE) agency.

However, we have to be very wary of thinking that this will do anything to improve patient care and address the significant issues facing the NHS.

These cuts that going with its abolition are deeper than those imposed by Tory health secretary Andrew Lansley in 2012.

They are significant for integrated care boards

(ICBs), which had a 30 percent cut last year in staffing and running costs.

This will simply create more disorganisation and chaos.

The NHS is a very large, extremely complex and increasingly fragmented system, despite all the rhetoric about integration.

And like any complex system, it needs a multiplicity of skills and professionals working together to run effectively.

The cuts facing NHSE staff as it is abolished—and the very significant

cuts in ICBs—will impact directly on patient care.

Once again, the NHS will lose knowledgeable and experienced clinical and non-clinical health professionals.

Experienced

I too have worked with NHSE and ICB management.

It’s true they are often highly paid management consultants with lovely PowerPoints but very little understanding.

But that is not the sum total of who works in NHSE or ICBs. It was my

colleagues in the ICB who led and implemented the Covid vaccination rollout, for example.

This ensured the most vulnerable and vaccine hesitant people had access in places they trusted.

We really should not be welcoming this or think this will improve frontline healthcare.

Nor should we buy into the current narrative devaluing the role of non-clinical professionals in enabling the delivery of good patient care.

Siobhan Hawthorne
East London

Problems with drama

ADOLESCENCE, the Netflix drama (Socialist Worker, 26 March), is certainly a powerful and compelling series. The writing and performances are stunning.

Knife crime, the poisonous impact of online misogynists and the distorting effect this has on young people all need to be addressed.

Yet there are serious problems with the series.

The second episode, which focused on the school both the victim and killer attended, was simply awful.

No school bears any relation to the shitshow portrayed in the episode.

Miserable

It fed a right wing myth of “feral” children. It portrayed schools as miserable unhappy places—stinking, dirty places with no learning taking place and staff who mostly didn’t care much either.

The reality is, despite all the funding cuts and all the genuine damage caused by the exam factory culture, most of the time children still like being in school.

In my experience the vast majority of teenagers are overwhelmingly kind to each other.

They are respectful to adults and do not behave in the caricatured fashion this episode portrayed.

Paul McGarr
Cambridge



Don't underestimate anti-union law betrayal

THE Labour government's delay in removing the 50 percent turnout rule required for strikes to be lawful is worse than even some envisage (Socialist Worker, 19 March).

Labour is holding back until electronic balloting is introduced.

Trials

But in 2017, an official review of electronic balloting recommended that, before it could be implemented, trials of non-statutory ballots should be held first.

This would only further delay it.

The same review also

insisted that a postal ballot option should be retained alongside any e-balloting.

This means the current slow pace of strike ballots, lasting several weeks, would be retained.

Even worse, Labour has backtracked on its promise to reduce the period of strike notice to employers from 14 to seven days.

It will instead be ten days, to give bosses more time to counteract the effects of strikes.

That says it all.

Dave Lyddon
Staffordshire

Silenced for supporting Palestine

I WAS in parliament yesterday discussing the assisted dying bill. I was wearing my Free Palestine badge.

Security took it off me, saying you can't wear that in here. Does that not sum up the state of our current government?

Rob Punton
Birmingham

■ A COUNTRY that takes money from disabled and sick people to pay for more “defence” spending isn’t worth defending.

Sasha Simic
East London

Le Pen banned from standing but we need to keep fighting

All anti-fascists can celebrate Marine Le Pen's conviction, but we can't rely on the courts to beat back the threat of the far right, argues Thomas Foster

ANTI-RACISTS are celebrating after fascist Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Rally (RN), was banned from running in the next presidential election on Monday.

But activists say the threat has not gone away. The courts barred Le Pen from public office for five years, with immediate effect.

This means that she cannot stand in the 2027 presidential race.

The courts found Le Pen, the RN as an organisation and dozens of leading party figures guilty of embezzling millions of pounds from European Parliament funds.

And the judge issued the public office ban using a so-called "provisional execution" measure.

This means the ban holds regardless of any appeal process and is immediately put in place.

The judge has also sentenced Le Pen to four years in prison, two of which are suspended, and a fine of £84,000.

The prison penalty and fine won't be applied until Le Pen's appeals are exhausted.

Matthieu, a revolutionary socialist in France, told Socialist Worker, "It is good as any blow against the RN and Le Pen.

"But it won't change anything without a movement from below against fascism."

The president of RN Jordan Bardella is now likely to run for president instead of Le Pen.

Bardella reacted to the court's decision by claiming "French democracy has been executed".

And Le Pen said in November about the case, "It's my political death they are after."

The decision could cause fascists to take to the streets in protest.

Warned

Political scientist Jean-Yves Camus warned before the sentences were passed that a ban would anger Le Pen's supporters.

He said, "RN voters are quite prone to thinking they are victims of the 'elite'.

"An immediate ineligibility verdict could reinforce this sentiment of being ostracised."

The court found that the leadership of RN created fake European Parliament assistant contracts to divert funding towards easing the financial burdens of the fascist party.

The funds were used not just for



Marine Le Pen in the dock

salaries of RN party workers, but also personal enrichment, such as paying for end-of-contract bonuses and Christmas bonuses.

The court explained that as early as 2014, Le Pen ordered new Members of European Parliament (MEP) to make their parliamentary assistance funding available to the party.

Under the guise of over 40 fake contracts, the court estimates that the RN embezzled over £3.5 million of public funds.

Embezzling

The court also found RN vice-president Louis Aliot guilty of embezzling public funds.

Aliot was sentenced to a three year ban from public office, but without provisional execution.

The court also found the RN organisation guilty, fining the fascist party £1.68 million, half of which is suspended, with confiscation of £840,000 guaranteed.

The RN has rallied against the "politicisation" of the judiciary.

In the run up to the case, the RN publicly reiterated the party's confidence that judge wouldn't "dare" use the provisional execution measure.

And Le Pen said in an interview on Sunday that provision execution gives judges "the power of life or death over our movement".

Anti-racists in France can't rely on courts to stop the rise of fascism in France.

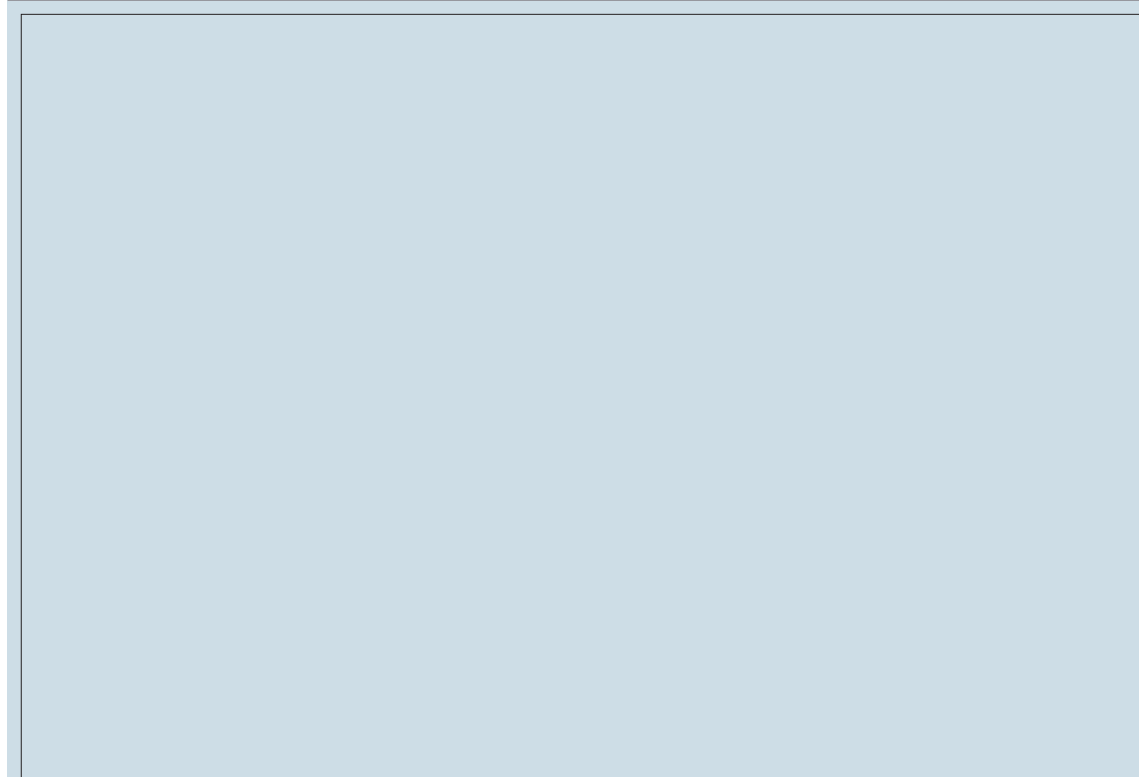
The conditions that have enabled the fascist RN to rise are still there, and its base of support still exists.

What is needed is more of the anti-racist demonstrations that happened on 22 March when over 130,000 took to the streets across France.

The protests were a major breakthrough for the anti-racist movement. More mass action can turn this blow against Le Pen into a fatal blow against the whole fascist RN.



South Asian earthquake



INSUFFICIENT BUILDING safety regulations left workers with no chance of escape

Poor and migrants bear brunt of disaster

HOPES OF finding more survivors amid the earthquake rubble in Myanmar and Thailand were fading as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

The powerful quake struck south east Asia last Friday.

At least 2,000 people have died, but many more are unaccounted for.

And there is enormous danger for the living, particularly those at quake's epicentre, Mandalay—Myanmar's second city.

Many have been forced to sleep in the open while the military regime remains focused on fighting its four-year civil war against democracy activists.

Already some 3.5 million people have been displaced by fighting and many more are now at risk of hunger and disease.

But instead of concentrating on rescue attempts, Myanmar's military continues its air attacks on resistance-held areas.

United Nations special rapporteur Tom Andrews said it

was "nothing short of incredible" that the military was continuing to "drop bombs when you are trying to rescue people".

In neighbouring Thailand, Hnin Nu Yee, was on the ground floor of the unfinished skyscraper that collapsed into a mound of crumpled steel and concrete.

Sprawling

She is one of up to 7 million Myanmar migrants now living in Thailand, many driven there by the war at home.

"I was doing sanitation work, throwing out garbage bags," Hnin said. "I escaped because I had a chance to run. Others from the upper floors could not run."

Hnin is among millions of workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos that work in the Thai capital, Bangkok.

Trucks transport labourers from makeshift corrugated iron dormitories to office and mall construction projects around the sprawling city.

"I don't know how many were trapped," says Hnin.

A man from the Bago region in Myanmar, said he earned about 500 baht a day —about £10—as a construction worker.

"We were working on about the third floor and when my whole body started feeling shaky and dizzy, I realised the earthquake was happening," he said. "I jumped down and ran as fast as I could."

Only four people out of the 11 people in his team have been found.

Some engineers in Thailand are calling for better building regulation standards and enforcement.

"Look at Japan—they keep developing their laws and design," said Suchatvee Suwansawat, a professor of civil engineering at King Mongkut University. "We should do that as well."

That is no doubt true. But the fact that so many of the dead in Thailand are migrant workers highlights how capitalism everywhere is a system based on racism and xenophobia.

After 2,000-strong Summit of Resistance

LEFT MUST SEIZE ITS CHANCE TO TURN TIDE

The sun shone on the huge crowd in east London last Saturday that was determined to put the heat on Labour and Reform UK by building an alternative. **Socialist Worker** reports on one of the most important meetings of the left in years.

Main pictures by **Guy Smallman**

I F YOU'RE on the left, you've probably felt on the back foot with Labour's betrayals, the rise of Reform UK and lack of resistance. But if you were at last week's Summit of Resistance, you won't feel like that anymore.

Over 2,000 people joined the event in east London last Saturday to say, "We demand change." An hour after it began, hundreds were still queuing up to get into The Cause music venue in Canning Town, Newham.

Sam from Carlisle near the Scottish border "decided at 6pm last night to come here" after hearing about it through Just Stop Oil (JSO) activism.

"Any movement can fizzle out—I'd like to see how to take movements forwards," he told **Socialist Worker**.

The summit brought together people from across the movements from Palestine and anti-racist activists, climate campaigners to striking workers. And there were people who have not been politically active before—but hate the Starmer government.

It came a week after the Labour government issued its Spring Statement—a declaration of open class war.

Sophia from **Independent MP Jeremy Corbyn spoke**



Raging in London at Labour's disability cuts last week

Disabled People Against Cuts said, "Labour says cutting benefits is like removing a 16 year old's pocket money."

"They are not even trying to hide that they are infantilising us—it's not pocket money, it's a lifeline."

She added, "Thank you for everyone coming to the demonstrations, but this is not the end. We need to look at the local elections and look at the MPs who have said they won't vote for these cuts. We need to be creative with our actions."

At another session, Jan from north London received huge cheers when she talked about plans to protest at the offices of the Labour MP Emily Thornberry.

The day was an

opportunity to discuss and debate how to overcome the obstacles to building the resistance we need.

One major challenge is the trade union leaders—who've mostly not wanted to lead a fight against "our" Labour government.

The other is "Labourism", the idea that what happens in parliament is more important to winning political change than struggles on the streets and workplaces.

Speaking at a session on alternatives to austerity, economist James Meadway said, "We obviously can't rely on the Labour government to deliver. We can't rely on Labour MPs."

"I don't think we can even rely on the trade unions to necessarily pull their fingers out. I say this because I saw the reaction of the Unite union's leadership to the announcement of extra arms expenditure."

"We can't have them march us to the top of the hill and then march us back down again."

"Climate change is a class issue," said Suzanne from the Campaign Against Climate Change in another session.

She urged trade unionists to fight for a just transition and to put forward the argument that climate action creates jobs.

Workers fighting back ran through the discussions. A session on how to unite



The opening session at the packed out Summit



Claire
Striking worker
Manchester

Claire, a striking social worker and Unison union assistant branch secretary, spoke to huge applause about the dispute at Manchester Early Intervention in Psychosis teams.

After the session, Claire told **Socialist Worker, "I was really nervous but it was so nice to speak to other workers in a similar situation."**

workers in struggle heard from NEU, UCU, Unite and Unison union members.

Glasgow UCU union member Matt told **Socialist Worker**, "At the moment, a stone's throw away from my work there is an occupation for Palestine."

"There is a strike of finance workers, workers at Strathclyde university and a Scottish water strike. Workers are being squeezed more now than at any point since I've been alive—it's time to fight back."

He added, "I'm hoping the event can build networks of resistance to challenge Starmer and the rise of Reform UK."

Steven, a bin worker on indefinite strike in Birmingham, spoke at the summit and went around with a delegation of supporters shaking buckets.

They raised over £350 to support the strikers (see page 16).

The Palestine movement has rocked British society with up to four million people taking part in demonstrations, protests, encampments, direct actions and more.

But it faces challenges—from the Israeli state that's ramping up the genocide and the British state that's ramping up repression to drive it off the streets.

Debates about how to deepen—and escalate—the Palestine movement



Summit of Resistance in London last weekend

Taz, University student, Bradford

Taz addressed the meeting on workers' struggle to point to the role students can play in strikes and disputes.

"We can be the link between students, workers and the community," she said. Taz has also been involved in trying to persuade workers at a nearby arms firm not to make parts for the genocide in Palestine.

hope—that's the challenge."

The "Party Time" session on left alternatives saw one of the liveliest debates of the day.

Zoe from the Green Party spoke from the platform about the left wing network within the party, Greens Organise. "Building a new party will take a long time—we can build on what we already have," Zoe said, urging people to join them.

Another Green Party member suggested that activists join the Greens and elect a left wing leader.

Huw from Bristol said the Green Party in the city was "implementing austerity". And he pointed to the record of the Greens in Germany where they've lined up behind the Nato warmongers' alliance and imperialism.

Oonagh, a disability activist, said, "I don't believe that real change comes through elections and parliament. But people do take electoral politics seriously—so this is a good way to get our ideas across. We need uncompromising

people who will not capitulate. People who will support Palestine without throwing trans+ people under the bus, people who want adequate housing without blaming migrants."

They added that "very importantly we need people who will bring together" the fights and say "capitalism" is the problem.

The summit needs to be a springboard for resistance across Britain against the Starmer government, Israel's genocide, climate inaction and the rise of the far right.

Lewis Nielsen is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) anti-fascist officer.

He said, "Days like today matter because there are times in history when you have to pick a side."

"Labour is on the side of the super rich, the tax dodgers, the billionaires. It's on the side of warmongers. It is on the side of racists, not the anti-racists."

He added, "We need a lot more resistance. Wouldn't it be good if the day they vote through the benefit cuts in parliament there are protests up and down making Britain ungovernable. Couldn't we have a coordinated day of action to shut down arms factories fuelling genocide in Gaza."

"Be part of We Demand Change—we can build a better society, let's fight for it."

We face an urgent challenge to build struggle and a socialist alternative based on it—let's seize our chance.



Huw from Bristol noted that the Greens there were pushing through austerity



Drawing the sessions at the summit

PICTURE: JO HOLLAND

day across the country, we demonstrate outside all the arms factories we possibly can."

Another activist from Bristol—where people have been taking action against the Elbit factory—got up to say they "wanted to endorse the speaker from Portsmouth".

Rob from Bradford said the day of action on Saturday 12 April is an opportunity to target arms companies and institutions complicit in the genocide.

The "Turning the Tide" session was a chance to bring together activists fighting oppression and

the far right.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) national organiser Samira Ali drew applause when she said, "After anti-racist counter protests in Doncaster and Birmingham, Reform UK knows they will face opposition wherever they go."

Mukhtar Dar the veteran anti-racist activist spoke to Socialist Worker after addressing the crowd. "That was an important and timely discussion," he said.

"It showed how we can connect different communities targeted by the right, especially trans+ people."

"Yes, we need to build a broad movement to stop the right dividing us. But people want a political alternative too. We need a party that can bring people together and provide



Phillip Birmingham

This is one of the few left wing events I've been to which have exceeded the organisers' expectations.

There is such a wide variety of people here and I feel we are not just talking to ourselves here.

They want us to feel isolated and demoralised but this event shows we have collective power to change things.



Striking teachers protesting outside the education department in London last month

What you can do next...

AFTER A day of debates, the organisers of the summit are meeting this week to plan a programme of action.

They have called for "We Demand Change summits in towns and cities across Britain to organise, strategise and speak out".

They're already planning, "A mass campaign calling for Welfare not Warfare and taxing the rich, to win a fairer society for all."

"A set of demands from the movement, for the movement—shaped by people like you, to unite our struggles and strengthen our voice."

"Take the survey to get involved in your local area, help shape the campaign, and stay connected."

Have your say. Fill in a form to send to the summit organisers at tinyurl.com/SummitHappin



Birmingham bin strikers raised over £350 for their solidarity fund

MASS PROTESTS have erupted across Turkey following the arrest of opposition leader and Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu on fabricated terror and corruption charges.

The state has closed Metro stations. Police have cordoned off towns, checking every vehicle that enters. And over 1,900 protesters are in prison. But hundreds of thousands continue to brave pepper spray, plastic bullets and water cannons every day to defend what remains of Turkish democracy.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's order to arrest Imamoglu—as he was to be named the Republican People's Party (CHP) presidential candidate—has plunged the regime into political crisis.

Understanding Turkey's history is key to understanding what forces are in play today.

What is Erdogan's social base and why is he losing support?

IN 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a split from the Islamic Virtue Party party, won a sweeping election victory. And under Erdogan the economy grew rapidly.

While the AKP is an Islamic party, Erdogan has pushed few measures to enforce religious rule. But he has tactfully mobilised Muslim support by exploiting the majority's sense of exclusion.

Erdogan's base therefore lies in both poor, pious areas and among the new "Islamic bourgeoisie", created through the opening of Turkey's economy in the 1980s.

"The AKP still has some power over the urban poor and peasants, but economic decline favours the opposition CHP," Eren, a revolutionary socialist in Turkey, explained.

Since 2018, Turkey has been plagued by economic crisis. The AKP pushed stimulus packages to combat economic slowdown. Keeping interest rates low satisfied the capitalist class by providing cheap credit—but inflation spiralled.

In 2024, Erdogan began pushing more orthodox, deflationary policies. To cool inflation from its highs of 83 percent, he increased VAT and petrol taxes and limited the minimum wage.

What is the class character of the protests?

ERDOGAN HAS failed to deal with inflation and economic crisis. Instead he has shifted the burden onto workers. That

MASS PROTESTS have taken place in Turkey every night

TURKEY A NEW MOOD FOR CHANGE ON THE STREETS

Revolutionary socialist Eren spoke to Arthur Townend about the roots of the uprising in Turkey, the crisis facing the ruling party and the nature of the opposition movement

President Erdogan

is driving the erosion of his social base among the poor. The movement on the streets today has captured that anger.

The Turkish state's response has been characteristic of a weak government losing support—violent repression, using tear gas and mass arrests to try to subdue protesters.

The protests are partly motivated by Erdogan's vicious attacks on democracy. CHP leader Ozgur Ozel has been vocal in his support of them. "From now on, no one should



We urgently need an anti-fascist front and we need the Kurdish party in the movement

expect the Republican People's Party to do politics in salons—from now on, we are in the streets, in the squares," he said.

However opportunistic, this signals the mood for change.

In the local elections last year, the CHP surpassed the AKP by over 1.3 million votes.

But the protests are about more than support for the CHP.

They represent rage against the very system that allows such political despotism, violence and economic attacks on working people.

The protests echo an earlier political crisis for Erdogan. In 2013, his regime began developing Taksim Square, demolishing a 200 year old military barracks to build a shopping centre and hotels.

A small occupation took place to protect trees that were to be cut down—and when police descended on occupiers, protests erupted. These "Gezi Park" protests saw one million people protesting across Turkey and the occupation of Taksim.

As Ron Margulies, a socialist in the movement, wrote at the time, "Clearly, a million people did not battle with police and breathe pepper gas, which burns the eyes and lungs and hurts like hell, for a few trees or even against a monstrous shopping mall.

"The trees, the mall and, most of all, the police violence simply provided the spark which ignited a pre-existing tinderbox."

In 2013, that tinderbox was a decade of the ravages of neoliberalism accompanied by a violent, authoritarian regime.

What is the CHP?

THE CHP'S electoral success is driven by disillusionment in Erdogan's regime, not simply by support for its policies. But The CHP's ideology—Kemalism—is pervasive in Turkey.

The Republic of Turkey was founded on Kemalism after the downfall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War. "Kemalism, as a pragmatic programme of nation-building, developed the legal, economic and political structure of a national market and industry," Eren explained.

Turkey's first president, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founded the CHP in 1924. Until 1950, it ruled as a single party.

"The Kemalists copied Soviet-style command economy practices. Secular modernisation and Soviet-style development were the key factors of the Turkish left wing parties' sympathy for Kemalism.

"But top-down modernisation and secularisation led to unrest and resistance. The Turkish state used violence against any form of Kurdish, religious or workers' movements under the one-party dictatorship."

In 1950, the CHP opened up elections—and lost. Kemalism remained influential, but slowly declined.

"Kemalism was reinvented in the 1990s as a leftist ideology and a reaction against political Islam. It represented secularism and the 'Western' way of life. Since the mid-2000s, it has been representing democracy," Eren said.

"In reality, Kemalist Turkey has never been secular or democratic, and it is not left wing. The CHP uses Kemalism as a unifying ideology for the whole nation, but in reality it is the ideology of the ruling class."

What is happening with the Kurds in Turkey?

KURDISH repression is woven into the fabric of Kemalism. “Turkey was built as a strong ethno-state,” Eren explained. In the 1930s, the Turkish military murdered over 13,000 Kurds.

Erdogan has also relentlessly repressed Kurds. But recently he’s been negotiating with Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK). Ocalan has called on the PKK to lay down arms.

“The Kurdish movement has so far not joined the protests in Turkey, although of course individual Kurdish people are on the streets. The new dialogue process between Ocalan and the Turkish state is getting serious,” Eren said.

“An alliance with the Kurdish movement, which has a strong army in Syria, is important for the Erdogan government.

“The new Turkish-backed government in Syria is also negotiating with the Syrian section of the Kurdish movement, the YPG. The Kurdish movement does not want these negotiations to be disbanded by the government.”

However, the pro-Kurdish DEM party has made a statement against Erdogan’s crackdown.

But far right and fascist forces in Turkey are mobilising against the peace negotiations and are attacking feminists and LGBT+ currents in the protests.

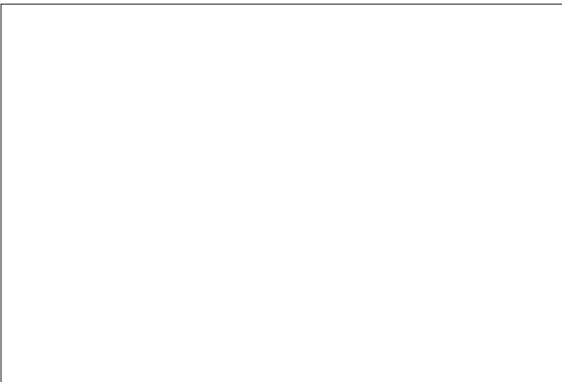
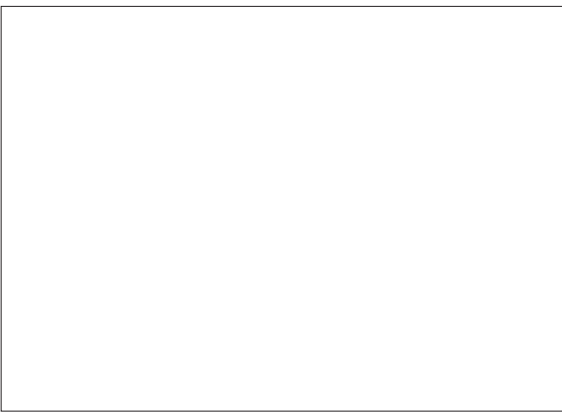
Both the Iyi Party and the Victory Party, splits from the fascist MHP party, are strongly involved in the movement against Erdogan.

“A few weeks ago,” Eren explained, “Victory Party leader Umit Ozdag was imprisoned for ‘inciting the public to hatred and hostility’—but the CHP leadership sees him as a potential ally.”

What is the potential for the protests?

THE FUTURE of the protests could be determined by the army, which has not intervened yet. Historically, the army has seen itself as the guarantor of secular Kemalism.

“Between 1950 and 2016, there were four successful and at least two unsuccessful military coups. The weak and



Protesters raising the flag of Turkey and the image of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (top) Protests have faced repression from the state (above)

young ruling class has always depended on the help of the army,” Eren said.

But Erdogan has largely marginalised the army from political life. The true determinant of the protests will likely be the working class.

Turkey has a large working class, especially in the textile industry. And amid the protests, education union Egitim Sen launched a one-day strike last Monday, with students protesting across the country.

Eren explained that mobilising workers as an independent force is essential. “Polarisation between Kemalism and ‘AKP reactionism’ would favour the government. We need a new polarisation between workers and students against the ruling class”—the class that, ultimately, the CHP represents.

Further, while the Kurds are absent, “We urgently need an anti-fascist front and we need the Kurdish party and its social power in the movement,” Eren added. That requires breaking from the CHP and Kemalism.

Erdogan’s regime faces an overwhelming crisis of legitimacy, caused by his own autocratic measures to fend off declining popularity. Capitalising on that mood for change requires embedding the movement in Turkey’s powerful working class.

Eren is a pseudonym



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM with Judy Cox

Has Trump changed the nature of the state?

AFTER DONALD Trump’s White House takeover, can we still describe the state as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the ruling class”, as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did in The Communist Manifesto?

Trump certainly has a plan. He promised his billionaire allies tax cuts of £4 trillion.

Now Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency is slashing tens of thousands of jobs across federal government departments.

Musk is set to target Medicaid, which gives 20 percent of Americans access to healthcare.

Trump is also cutting the defence budget, but only to “cut the fat at HQ and grow the muscle—war fighters”, as defence secretary Pete Hegseth claims.

Decades of neoliberalism have seen cuts to government welfare systems across the globe. Back in the 1980s, then Republican president Ronald Reagan declared that “government is not the solution to our problem—government is the problem”.

Shrinking

But today across Europe, governments are not shrinking spending—they are diverting billions from welfare to weapons.

Trump is going even further. He is unravelling the key mechanisms by which the state has protected the interests of US capital. But the US state is bigger than Trump.

The state developed as society divided into different classes and those who controlled the wealth needed to protect themselves.

The essence of the state, Vladimir Lenin observed, is the “apparatus of violence, armed contingents of troops, prisons and other means of subjugating the will of others by force”.

The state developed to protect the ruling class—and the ruling class has a monopoly over the state.

That doesn’t mean the ruling class is a homogenous class. It is divided by

ELON MUSK wants to take a chainsaw to the state

conflicting interests and ideas which can play out as fierce arguments within state institutions.

Modern states depend on the accumulated wealth of the capitalist class, which it collects through taxes and revenues. They must ensure that the capitalists within their geographical area are protected and supported.

This protection can take the form of economic policies, such as tariffs.

Or it can take the form of negotiations which rest on US military might, such as grabbing Ukraine’s resources or threatening Greenland.

Strategic alliances against rival imperialisms depend on squandering vast resources on so-called “defence” spending.

The state also protects capital by using force to crush any working class resistance that becomes too threatening by using the police, the courts and, if necessary, the army.

But the state does not have to rely only on force. States can claim legitimacy by appearing to be neutral bodies which enforce laws that maintain stability.

For most of the 20th century, many states expanded

their activities from repression and imperialist war to welfare.

They ensured the supply of educated and healthy workers, invested in research and development, maintained transport infrastructure and guaranteed basic services.

The expansion of welfare was also a response to the pressure exerted by the working class for public provision for those unable to work and for care for the young, old and sick.

Class

As the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrote, “The state is the entire complex of practical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules.”

The prolonged crisis of profitability in the world economy has prompted a restructuring of welfare and care-giving. But the state isn’t shrinking its militarism or incarceration.

Trump is posing as the master of the US state rather than its servant.

But US corporations might find they miss disaster management and education. And many ageing Maga Trump supporters rely on Medicaid and social security.

Trump will not rise or fall on Musk’s ability to take a chainsaw to the federal budget. Much more fundamental is the ability of US capital to compete with its Chinese rivals and the strength of the resistance waged by US workers.

READ MORE

- **Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989** by Kerem Oktem £23.49
- **What are we to do with Islam? The case of Turkey** by Ron Margulies, isj.org.uk/what-are-we-to-do-with-islam/

- **The Fall of the Turkish Model** by Cihan Tugal £20.99
- Buy your books at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, go to socialistworker.co.uk/join-swp

TURKEY—REPRESSION, RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

HUDDERSFIELD

Wed 9 Apr, 6.30pm

428 926 9492

Pass-142857

The Mission, Lord St,

HD1 1QA

LONDON - TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 2 Apr, 7pm

896 1690 8769

The Cabin, St Margaret's House,

21 Old Ford Rd.,

E2 9PL

OXFORD

Wed 9 Apr, 7.15pm

861 2001 6477

Michael Young Building,

Manzil Way

OX4 1YH

ABERDEEN

How can we resist the war on trans+ people?

Thu 10 Apr, 6pm

Aberdeen Trade Union

Council, 22A Adelphi,

Aberdeen,

AB11 5BL

BIRMINGHAM

Immigration—The myths

spread to divide us

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

281-634-5938

Warehouse Cafe,

54 Allison St,

Birmingham

B5 5TH

BOURNEMOUTH

Crash, crisis and class struggle—Why Marx matters today

Thu 10 Apr, 7.30pm

462-087-4995

YMCA, 56 Westover Rd,

Bournemouth

BH1 2BS

BRADFORD

James Connolly and the Irish struggle against British imperialism

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

885-9187-7552

Cafe Liza,

Ground Floor,

Grosvenor Business Centre,

41 Great Horton Rd,

BD7 1AT

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Welfare or warfare—Is war inevitable under capitalism?

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

589-4176-7501

Friends Meeting House, Ship

St Brighton, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

Know your enemy—Who are Reform UK?

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

Palestine Museum & Cultural

Centre, 27 Broad St,

BS1 2HG

CAMBRIDGE

Was China ever socialist?

Thu 10 Apr, 7.30pm

681-800-4408

Mill Road Community Centre,

6 Hazell St, Cambridge

CB1 2GN

CARDIFF

A Marxist history of conspiracy theories

Thu 10 Apr,

7.30pm

512 6553 689

Cardiff Meeting House,

43 Charles St, CF10 2GB

CHESTERFIELD

Capitalism, crime and punishment—Why prisons don't work

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

828-532-8731

The Hub,

Low Pavement,

S40 1PF

COVENTRY

Starmer, Labour and the new austerity—How do we fight back?

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

823 945 1917

Friends Meeting House,

Hill Street, Coventry,

CV1 4AN

DERBY & NOTTINGHAM

Ukraine, Trump and imperialism—Is US imperialism in chaos?

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

354 874 4790

West End Community Centre,

Mackworth Rd.,

DE22 3BL

DORSET

A warning from Germany—The AfD and anti-fascist resistance

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

863 7941 3641

Centenary Club 21,

Jubilee Close, Weymouth

DT4 7BG

DUDLEY

Disability, austerity and resistance to the cuts

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

869 514 7392

The Court House,

30 New St, Dudley, DY11LP

DUNDEE

50 years in the heat of the struggle—Fundraiser and Q and A

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

894 2628 7708

Meadow Lane Bar,

51-53 Meadowside, Dundee,

DD1 1EQ

EDINBURGH

Disability, austerity and resistance to the cuts

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

Southside Community Centre,

117 Nicolson St, Newington,

EH8 9ER

EXETER & DEVON

Things can only get worse—Why is Starmer so useless?

Thu 10 Apr, 7.30pm

865-2972-2883

GLASGOW NORTH

Homes for people not for profit—Why capitalism fails at housing

Thur 10 Apr, 7pm

Maryhill Central Halls,

292-316 Maryhill Rd, Glasgow,

G20 7YE

GLASGOW SOUTH

Homes for people not for profit—Why capitalism fails at housing

Thur 10 Apr, 7pm

Roma Cultural Centre,

43 Nithsdale St, Glasgow,

G41 2PZ

HARLOW

Smashing the sexist system

Thu 10 Apr, 7.30pm

832 8746 7480

The Mountstevan Room,

Moot House, Harlow,

CM20 3HB

HASTINGS

Police, Palestine and repression—Is Britain becoming more authoritarian?

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

The White Rock Hotel,

1-10 White Rock,

Hastings TN34 1JU

KENT

Gramsci, hegemony and revolution

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

434-623-8064

Sunlight Centre,

Richmond Rd., Gillingham

ME7 1LX

LEEDS

The invention of the Western diet—Capitalism, food and colonialism

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

The Swarthmore

Education Centre,

2-7 Woodhouse Square,

Leeds, LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Elections, parliament and winning change—How can the left challenge Starmer?

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

493 925 5919

Arts Bar, 22 Hope St,

Liverpool, L1 9BY

LONDON - HACKNEY

Police, Palestine and repression—Is Britain becoming more authoritarian?

Thu 10 Apr, 7.30pm

Halkevi Centre,

31 Dalston Lane, E8 3DF

LONDON - HARINGEY

The new face of imperialism—Trump, Starmer and Ukraine

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

459 388 1576

St John Vianney Church,

386 West Green Rd,

N15 3QL

LONDON - ISLINGTON

No more exam factories—The socialist alternative for education

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

Elizabeth House,

2 Hurlock St,

London,

N5 1ED

LONDON - NEWHAM

Modi's India and the Hindutva—Islamophobia beyond Europe

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

597 631 7124

Ithaca House,

27 Romford Rd,

E15 4LJ

LONDON - SOUTH

Why socialists need a united front to beat the far right

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

859-6433-5114

Pass-820061

Vida Walsh Centre,

2b Saltoun Rd, London,

SW2 1EP

LONDON - SOUTH EAST

Know your enemy—Who are Reform UK?

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

529 913 6390

Moonshot Centre,

Angus St, London

SE14 6LU

LONDON - WALTHAM FOREST

Is biology at the root of women's oppression?

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

543 23 057

William Morris Centre,

Greenleaf Rd.,

E17 6QQ

LONDON - WEST AND NW

Syria, imperialism and revolution

Thurs 10 Apr, 7.30pm

8937 858 7112

Bay 20 Community Centre,

71 St Marks Rd.,

W10 6JG

Socialist Workers Party meetings

Meetings are open to non-members of the SWP.

Some meetings are hybrid—on Zoom as well as in person.

If your local meeting is a hybrid one, the meeting ID will be on this page.

The password for all meetings (unless indicated otherwise) is 967537.

NEWCASTLE

What's going on? Marxism and the modern world

Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

Newcastle Arts Centre,

67 Westgate Rd,

NE1 5SG

NORWICH & EAST ANGLIA

Welfare or warfare—Is war inevitable under capitalism?

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

906 652 5299

Wensum Sports Centre,

169a King St, NR1 1QH

PLYMOUTH

Why is capitalism so dangerous for women?

Thu 10 Apr, 7pm

897 1685 8334

Quaker Meeting House,

Hyde Park House,

74 Mutley Plain, PL4 6LF

PORTSMOUTH

Disability, austerity and resistance to the cuts

Wed 9 Apr, 7.30pm

488 934 2809

Somerstown

Community Centre,

Gaga’s return is not a minute too soon

by REBECCA GIVAN

AFTER two jazz albums and the box office failure of *Joker—Folie à Deux*, Lady Gaga’s latest album *Mayhem* is a return to the dance pop that made her famous.

But it’s also grounded in the pop of today. The album is filled with callbacks and cultural references.

The track Garden of Eden is an attempt to capitalise on the revival of 2000s party girl pop that was jump started by last year’s Brat summer.

How Bad Do U Want Me starts with a synth line sampled from Yazoo’s Only You before transitioning to a Taylor Swift-style chorus with lyrics seemingly referencing recent hits Crash by Charli XCX and Rush by Troye Sivan.

“You hate the Crash, but you love the Rush” Gaga sings.

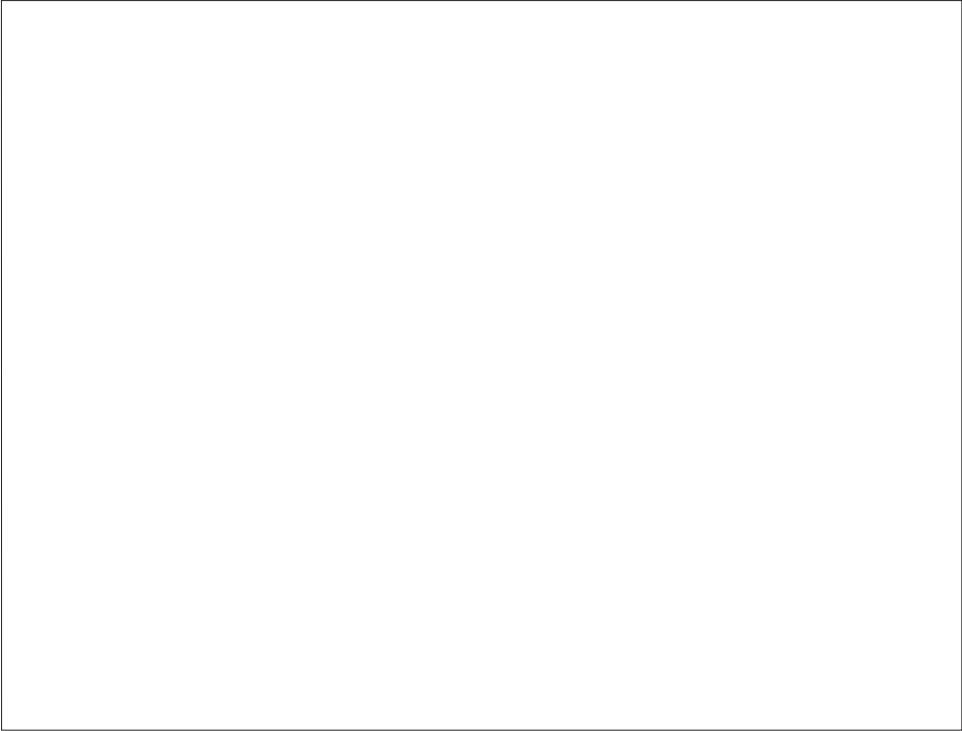
Industrial

The opening two tracks have an industrial sound reminiscent of Nine Inch Nails or Gaga’s own Born This Way album, and later track ZombieBoy is Nile Rogers inspired.

All of this leads to the soulful ballad Die With A Smile—now one of the longest reigning number one hits of all time.

The album feels timeless yet contemporary. The clashing genres and elements are united by the album’s theme of chaos.

And the sincerity of the project shines. The album began after Gaga’s fiancé



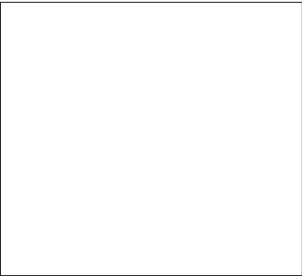
LADY GAGA’S new album *Mayhem* (below) depicts the chaos surrounding her

urged her to make a pop album and “lean into the joy of it”.

Lady Gaga’s disability is prominent throughout the album—Gaga has fibromyalgia, a condition that can cause chronic pain. The



Mayhem depicts a different side to disability



album’s title character is a personification of Gaga’s disability.

Depicted as chaotic, the album deals with a part of herself that Gaga says she often finds difficult to accept, an experience many disabled people will relate to.

However, the album also

depicts a different side to disability. In music videos and live performances Gaga, as *Mayhem*, is seen dancing with a cane. Mobility aids, often perceived as a sign of diminished autonomy, are shown as something that enables expression.

And the album is also unapologetically queer.

It references drag and ball culture and celebrates individual expression at a time when homophobia and transphobia are becoming more prominent.

As the far right weaponises homophobia, and politicians target disabled people and LGBT+ people, *Mayhem* is a welcome break.

Story of resistance—with a thorn in its ending

THEATRE

WHITE ROSE—THE MUSICAL

Marylebone Theatre until 13 April

BASED ON the story of a group of students in Munich during the Second World War that defy the Nazis, this play celebrates resistance.

The White Rose group is led by the 21-year-old Sophie Schöhl and her older brother, Hans.

They band together

with a few others in secret in 1942, to write, print and distribute leaflets decrying Hitler.

As such, *White Rose* is a treat—especially when compared to what currently shows in theatre-land.

There are problems with the staging, however. While the brutality of the regime is referred to, the play fails to capture the intense claustrophobic atmosphere of a fascist state.



And there are problems when it comes to explaining the Nazis.

So, Hans, who was in the Hitler Youth before he saw the truth, explains what attracted him to Nazism. But there’s no attempt to explain the crisis enveloping

German society that made him seek out such an “alternative”.

As the cost of war rises, accelerated by the Nazis’ defeat at Stalingrad, the conscription is lowered to 14.

Death, austerity and looming defeat spreads resistance to even conservative forces.

The question then arises—we know what the White Rose group fights against, but what is it fighting for?

At this point

leaflets are flung into the audience that explain.

In the closing scenes the characters are put on trial and sentenced to death, followed by a touching scene between sister and brother, Sophie and Hans.

Reflecting upon their imminent death, they posit the question, “Was it worth it?”

That they answer in the rousing finale, “We shall not be silenced.”

Graham

COMMENT

UNDERCOVER SCIENTIST

Explaining Trump’s anti-science moves

ACADEMIC SCIENCE is currently going through a huge upheaval in the United States under Donald Trump.

Recently, the main US medical research funding body, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), advised scientists applying for grants to remove references to mRNA vaccine technology in their proposals.

This was the technology that helped accelerate the production of a vaccine during the Covid pandemic.

This advice is linked to the current US health secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr making negative statements about the effectiveness and safety of vaccines.

Meanwhile Elon Musk, who heads the new Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), wants to limit the amount allowed in NIH grants for indirect costs to 15 percent.

Some believe this could threaten the ability of the US to maintain its global lead in medical research. The move is partly inspired by some US universities taking as much as 69 percent of grants for general university facilities, infrastructure and administrative costs.

This is partly a consequence of other aspects of higher education in the US being underfunded. Therefore universities seek to cover costs in other ways, but it is a misuse of funds.

The question arises about whether the Trump government’s right wing populism represents a major shift away from scientific rationality. To answer this question, we need to look more closely at the relationship between science and society.

Science and technology has always played a key role in maintaining class society. Yet a major shift occurred in this relationship with the birth of capitalism. In previous class societies growth had been limited by the appetites of their ruling classes.

Advances

But the profit drive within capitalism leads to a constant pressure to innovate. It is this that underlies the development of recent advances in gene editing that could, for instance, revolutionise cancer therapy.

Yet capitalism is also not so different from past class societies. Over half of all research funding in the world is currently devoted to developing new ways to kill people.

Capitalism relies on the continual development of better ways to understand and manipulate the natural world, and this requires rational scientific methods.

But, capitalism is also currently in a deep state of crisis. This has created an environment for right wing populists such as Trump to gain office by misdirecting anger about current state of affairs towards imaginary social threats.

But another potentially fertile area for right wing movements is to encourage conspiracy theories.

The anti-vaccination movement is motivated by the idea that unsafe vaccines are being foisted on us by “big pharma”, not because they work, but to make a profit.

Similarly, a primary motivation behind Doge is the idea that ordinary people’s hard-earned tax dollars are being squandered by inefficient, corrupt government institutions.

There is an element of truth in both these claims. Vaccines are one of the most effective and safest forms of medicine, but it is also true that pharmaceutical companies develop them to make a profit.

Of course the irony is that Trump and Musk are just as much part of the capitalist ruling class as those they claim to oppose, and their actions will never benefit ordinary people.

So how should socialists respond to recent developments? We should point out that the misuse of medical research grants by US universities is a consequence of the marketisation of higher education.

Instead, university education should be available free for everyone, funded by a tax on the rich.

Socialists value evidence-based medicine, including vaccines and fight for more investment in them.

This means investment in vaccines against diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis—which have been neglected because these diseases mainly affect people in the Global South.

Ultimately, we are for a very different society. One where resources currently used to develop new ways of killing and maiming people, are instead used to develop medicines, not for profit, but for the benefit of all.

IN BRIEF

Engineers set to fix their pay

AROUND 40 workers in Slough are set to strike over a derisory pay offer. John Crane offered the engineers, who are in the Unite union, a 3 percent pay rise.

This is despite decades of below inflation pay rises and no pay award despite working through Covid.

The workers make mechanical engineering seals for bearings and pumps for the oil and gas industry. They are set to strike this Thursday 10, 17, 22 April, 1 and 6 May.

Heathrow strikes set for take off

PASSENGER assistance workers at Heathrow are set to strike for four days. Over 500 Unite union members have voted to strike over pay disparity.

Heathrow workers are angry as they are paid an average of 9.5 percent less than staff at Gatwick performing the same role.

Workers at both Heathrow and Gatwick are employed by Wilson James. Workers are set to strike from this Saturday.

Clean up for nurse UVW wages

CLEANING WORKERS at the V&A museum in London could strike over poverty pay.

The United Voices of the World union members are currently paid just £11.75 an hour and receive no sick pay. Workers have launched a campaign for £14.50 an hour, full sick pay from day one and an extra week of annual leave.

Workers are employed by TSS, but are treated as inferior to directly employed workers.

If TSS refuses to negotiate, workers will be balloted for strikes, but have made it clear they are prepared to strike.

Cable workers fight offshoring

PRYSMIAN Bishopstoke telecom cable workers are set to ballot for strikes against off-shoring. The Unite union workers produce cables for BT, but BT wants to offshore production. But the plant at Bishopstoke is profitable.

Workers could ballot for strikes to defend jobs.

Stagecoach drivers ballot for strikes

STAGECOACH IN West Scotland is refusing to pay its drivers. Around 500 Unite union members are being balloted for strikes after 99 percent voted to reject Stagecoach's pay offer.

Bosses made workers an offer that would still leave them the worst paid Stagecoach drivers across Britain.

If workers struck, they would shut down buses across west Scotland. The ballot will close on 17 April.

UNITE IN UCU

Unite workers on strike over toxic UCU bosses

by CAMILLA ROYLE

MEMBERS OF Unite who work for the UCU union started six weeks of strikes last week and are set to continue.

Unite union members say they face toxic working conditions, including bullying and micromanagement.

A Unite member told Socialist Worker that UCU "are the worst employer ever. You assume working for a union would be a really nice job. I've never encountered an employer so nasty."

"Instructions come out of nowhere that say from now on you will fill out a daily worksheet. If you don't you will be considered for a disciplinary."

"There is a restructure that they decided to impose with no consultation. We don't know where this has gone. We have been asking but have had no answers."

Micromanaged

One worker said, "I keep asking myself 'why?' Why am I no longer trusted to do my job? Why am I no longer allowed to collaborate with colleagues? Why do I suddenly need to be micromanaged?"

Another added, "I feel more and more disheartened, depressed and stressed by working for UCU."

Unite also argues that there is an ongoing problem of institutional racism at the union. Black staff say they



UNITE WORKERS in UCU union on a previous strike last year

have been disproportionately targeted for punitive action by management.

Staff who spoke up about racism at previous Unite UCU rallies have been victimised.

The Unite Black Members' Group said, "UCU management has consistently neglected to adopt an anti-racist approach in its practices, leading us to conclude that it is not genuinely committed to eradicating racism from the workplace."

Many ordinary UCU members are supportive of the Unite branch in their dispute, which has been ongoing for over a year. UCU branches would usually use their members' subs to employ someone. Now, some are transferring the money to Unite's strike fund while the employee is on strike.

A petition signed by hundreds of UCU members

called for the union to resolve the dispute with its staff. The statement called for an immediate end to outstanding disciplinary cases against black staff, an end to the victimisation and threats of potential disciplinary cases against UCU Unite officers.

The Unite striker agreed, "It's six weeks of escalating strikes so it's quite a big deal. All the work that is supposed to be done with UCU branches and to prepare for the UCU congress is not happening."

But they added that the strikes are still well supported by Unite members.

The UCU responded to the strikes by stating that it is "unnecessary" for Unite members to take action over "minor issues".

Workers are set to strike on 7-10 April, 14-16 April, 23-25 April, 28 April-2 May

HIGHER EDUCATION

University workers keep up fightback over cuts

UCU UNION members at Cardiff University have voted overwhelmingly to take hard hitting action over mass job cuts and course closures.

Some 83 percent voted for strikes and 86 percent backed action short of a strike. It's not hard to see why workers at Cardiff want to fight back. The university has plans to slash the jobs of 400 academic workers.

And the proposed cuts to nursing courses would deepen the staffing crisis in the NHS in Wales, which has a shortfall of 2,000 nurses.

The university's plans also involve axing some courses, including in modern languages and ancient history.

At Brunel University in west London, UCU members are striking until Thursday, and again on 7-11 April.

And strike ballots at Sheffield and Durham universities are due to close this week.

A ballot of UCU members at Edinburgh University is also due to start soon. Bosses

at the Scottish institution have threatened to make a huge £140 million of cuts.

Join the UCU national demonstration on 10 May in London.

UCU at the University of Sheffield International College (Usic) called off their planned one-day strike last week after a victory over redundancies.

Bosses had threatened to cut 36 jobs. They have now guaranteed there will be no compulsory redundancies.

Some of the remaining people at risk have been redeployed. When the union branch is satisfied that outstanding issues are resolved for these members, they will hold a ballot on whether to end the dispute.

Workers at Usic, run by the private firm Study Group, run courses to prepare international students for a university degree.

The win shows the power that workers have when they threaten to strike.

Dundee university boss under government fire

THE SCOTTISH parliament is considering using its legal power for the first time in its history to force the former principal of the University of Dundee to answer questions.

Iain Gillespie announced last year that there was a £35 million black hole in the budget and redundancies were inevitable.

He then left his job when details of his expenses were revealed. Gillespie is now refusing to attend parliament and face a grilling because he is busy "travelling".

The current management wants to cut the jobs of 632 workers. Even though the university has now been

offered a £22 million bailout by the Scottish Funding Council, it hasn't yet taken redundancies off the table.

UCU members at Dundee were on strike for three solid weeks in February and March in defence of jobs and education. Last week they held a huge all staff meeting with over 1,000 people attending in person and online. They also held a protest at the management offices.

UCU branch members are considering their next steps. The Unison branch at the university has also voted for strikes so there is an opportunity to take united action if the UCU acts quickly.

FINANCE

Third strike could 'crucify' Capita bosses

CAPITA FINANCE workers, organised with the Unite union, are once again leading the charge against the assault on fair pay in the finance sector.

Last Wednesday, the workers took to the streets to demand "Fair pay for everyone" in their third and longest strike. Workers rejected a previous pay offer where bosses tried to divide them by favouring better paid workers.

The already insulting offer added salt to the wound by explicitly excluding workers on a living wage. Bosses offered them a pay rise only in line with the national increase in April.

One Unite rep said, "We've got people here with 30 odd years of service and they get paid the minimum



wage." The bosses are legally required to increase the minimum wage. So should workers accept this as a concession to their demands?

Workers rejected the pay offer by 73 percent on a ballot turnout of 86 percent. So the answer is a firm "no".

One former Capita rep told Socialist Worker that the boss Aaron Hernandez,

formerly of Amazon, got a "nice, chunky increase" of 22 percent in 2024.

Another worker told Socialist Worker, "Three directors got a bonus of £650,000 between them, on top of a comfortable salary."

Bosses claim that there is no money in the pot for pay rises—apparently because they have distributed it among themselves.

Workers are whispering that this strike, which comes at the critical end of the financial year, will "crucify" the firm unless their demands are met.

As phone waiting lists balloon and operations back up, workers stand resolute with their simple demand, "What do we want? Fair pay. Who do we want it for? Everyone."

Manchester SWP member

FURTHER EDUCATION

Education unions' joint fight against management

AT THE Capital City College Group of colleges in London, both the NEU and UCU unions are united in their anger at management.

Sixth form workers in the NEU union are demanding to get the same 5.5 percent pay rise offered to other teachers.

UCU members are going into dispute over pay and consolidation. A new CEO, who was appointed last year, is proposing to merge the colleges so that some courses are offered at a single site rather than across the city. UCU say



NEU and UCU protesting

this destroys educational opportunities for young people.

The group's management also proposes to cut the last four mental health counsellor roles.

EDUCATION WORKERS

School workers take on the bullying bosses

by THOMAS FOSTER

A FIGHT over work conditions is unfolding at All Saints Catholic High School in Hackney, east London.

NEU education union members struck on Thursday and Friday last week because bosses are demanding they cover for other teachers.

Under national terms and conditions, this should only happen in “unforeseeable circumstances”. “But now management is getting teachers to cover in circumstances that were totally foreseeable,” Hackney NEU joint branch secretary Dave Davies told Socialist Worker.

“And management has been asking teaching assistants and support workers to cover teachers instead.”

He added that “management has refused to make any substantial changes”. It made an offer on cover, but workers rejected it as it simply shifted the burden on to support workers.

Negotiations

One NEU member told Socialist Worker management has been “unfair” and workers feel that they are “not being listened to”. She said that negotiations haven’t gone anywhere and management has spoken rudely to the strikers.

Management has treated the NEU rep “with a lack of respect,” she added. “Before that it was just a workplace disagreement, but after that I



ALL SAINTS workers aren't having it

am angry.” Elizabeth, who works at the school, argued that management is making these decisions as cost-saving measures after “government underfunding for years”. “And it isn’t a secret that we have a falling number of student enrolments.”

Elizabeth is a single mum of two girls and has been forced to use bank loans to pay her bills. She argued that the cost of living crisis has added to the difficulties schools are having at retaining teachers.

“All of the Saturday work I do, I don’t get paid for that. If the money doesn’t allow us to

meet our basic needs, then it is no surprise that teachers are leaving the profession.”

One NEU member said the higher workload would harm “the welfare of students and workers” and said they were “disappointed and frustrated with management”.

On the picket line, strikers discussed the NEU’s national indicative ballot for industrial action over Labour’s 2.8 pay insult.

One person said Britain is “broken” and there being no money left to give to anyone anyway, while another argued the money is there but in the

wrong hands. Another striker said, “There’s a disparity of pay structures, for example headteachers being paid £100,000 or £150,000 plus.

“You have young teachers who can’t afford to stay in teaching.”

The strikers pointed out that some “headteachers get paid more than prime ministers”.

The strike in Hackney is part of a wave of school walkouts that began last month. They have shown how action builds workers’ confidence to fight—and can build momentum for national action too.

CIVIL SERVICE

PCS members take long view on rep victimisation

PCS UNION members at Benton Park View in Newcastle are determined to fight back against the victimisation of three leading union reps.

They currently have four more days of strikes planned. Around 400 Unite union members are battling against bosses’ plans to steal £8,000 from some workers.

Rachel Farmer, Gordon Askew and Joel Hamilton were suspended from work last year after leading strikes at the huge civil service workplace.

Acting branch secretary

Angie Foggett told Socialist Worker, “We are very adamant that this is an attack on our branch and an attack on democracy within the civil service.”

The union branch says that management has not come to the negotiating table.

They said, “Rachel, Gordon and Joel have not yet been reinstated by HMRC. In fact HMRC have refused to engage with your union.”

They plan to picket at the main gates on the 7, 17, 30 April and 16 May.

Camilla Royle

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE



Picture: Just Stop Oil/Twitter

JUST STOP Oil (JSO) announced it was “hanging up the hi-vis” after three years. JSO Spokesperson Hayley Walsh told Socialist Worker that the decision was about “recognising the vast amounts that the campaign has achieved.” Go to socialistworker.co.uk for a full report

HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS

Nottingham workers eye up pay grades walkouts

SOME 800 health workers at two Nottingham hospitals are preparing to strike in a row over pay, grading and back pay.

Some 94 percent of Unison members at Queen’s Medical Centre and City Hospital backed the strike “unless hospital managers improve an offer on back pay”.

Workers plan to walkout for 48 hours next Monday and on 17, 22 and 28 April.

Health care assistants (HCAs) in Nottingham are the latest group in England and Wales to fight back against years of wrongly graded as band 2, the lowest in the NHS.

Many HCAs have for years

routinely done clinical tasks, such as taking blood and doing ECG readings—without being properly paid for the tasks.

Management now admits the error and has re-banded workers, but it is offering back pay to just August 2021. That’s years short of the union’s gold standard, set by the Unison’s north west region, which is 2019.

Bosses are now refusing to meet with Unison, saying they have made agreements with all other unions.

But Unison is the biggest union in healthcare, and it must now show management that it will not be disrespected.

AUSTERITY FIGHTBACK

Labour budget cuts are ‘divisive’ says protest

IN LEEDS, activists raged against the Labour spring statement on Wednesday last week. There were speakers from the campaigns End Social Care Disgrace and Keep Our NHS public, as well as Leeds Trades Council president, Jane Aitchison.

People spoke of their outrage of the divisions these cuts are creating. They also talked about how these cuts will disproportionately impact oppressed groups. Aitchison, who stood as

a Labour MP candidate in 2019, said that the Labour party is being “reduced to a party of work”.

“It is despicable and divisive and will not take us anywhere,” she said.

Gilda, from End Social Care Disgrace campaign spoke about the need for a national care service.

Charlotte, from the Yorkshire Feminist Collective, said that Labour has “messed with the wrong generations”. Imogen Evans and Tamirah Bass-Grant

REDUNDANCIES AVERTED

Victory at Solace Aid

DOMESTIC violence workers in east London are celebrating after bosses backed off from swingeing cuts to their service.

Bosses at the Solace charity threatened to sack a third of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) from their Tower Hamlets office. Yet the council said the outsourcer was still receiving the same funds so shouldn’t be slashing its workforce.

Instead of giving in to attacks, workers quickly unionised with the UVW union and planned to begin an indefinite strike.

WATER WORKERS

Strikes in the pipeline?

WORKERS AT Scottish Water struck last Friday.

Over 500 Unite union members walked out after pay talks failed. They struck from offices and wastewater treatment across the whole of Scotland. It impacted sewers, water treatment centres and pipework.

Scottish Water bosses have watered down a previous, pitiful pay offer, to just 3.4 percent.

Despite that, boss Alex Plant is paid £483,000.

Workers have shown they’re willing to strike but should escalate action if no better offer is made.

BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS GO ALL-OUT...

'WE ARE STRIKING FOR EVERYONE'

by ARTHUR TOWNEND

HUNDREDS OF refuse workers in Birmingham are in their fourth week of an indefinite strike.

The Labour-run council is pushing savage cuts—but the Unite union members are fighting for pay, jobs and workers' safety.

"The council has cut the waste reduction collection officer role. They act as an extra pair of eyes for the drivers," Steven, a striker at the Atlas depot, told Socialist Worker.

Last Thursday, the council announced it will issue compulsory redundancy notices to more than 70 workers impacted by the cutting of the role.

"The driver has a limited view. People need to let the driver know what is happening around them. It's a pivotal role—and without it the job is more dangerous."

Essential

Steven said that the role is not only essential for workers' safety, but "they deal face to face with the public".

"Without them, there's no-one to talk to the public," he explained. "There is no one to take away extra bin bags and deal with complaints—so this will impact the public."

"This will affect a lot of

people—more than people think. It's not just the public.

"We do schools and businesses and we have contracts with hospitals. The people making up these rules never do this job, and probably don't even take their own bins out. They sit in an office getting paid £300,000 a year.

"And that tax money is going to people making decisions they clearly don't know about."

But the council isn't just trying to slash essential jobs—it's attacking workers' wages.

Steven said that the council is attacking loaders "and it's also coming for drivers". "The council is trying to implement a pay banding system, similar to the NHS."

"This is why we are striking—so they don't come for anyone else's wages," said Steven. "Times are hard—how can you just take this

money from us when the suits are getting paid so much?

"You can't take this money from us and expect us to do the same work." The council's proposed cuts will mean pay grade 3 workers will lose up to £8,000 a year, and those on grade 2 will lose nearly £2,000 a year.

"So the strike is about the role, pay banding—but it's also about awareness," he said.

"Out of all the lorries, just three were in good condition. I've been here for nine years, and I've never had a good truck. Buttons don't work."

Rather than pay workers properly, the council is using agency workers to break the strike. Steven said, "Each depot is supposed to have 20 percent agency workers—but all depots have added another 20 percent."

"The issue is that agency workers don't necessarily know what they're doing. That is bad for the public, but also has a knock-on effect on the council."

"There have been a few clashes between strikers and non-strikers, but we get a lot of support from other staff members."

Some Birmingham residents are demanding council tax rebates as refuse services have essentially halted.

But Steven said that the public who know what is happening are very supportive. "There is a lot of misinformation—people think we are asking for more money."

"We are striking just to protect what we already have. Really we should be asking for more money, but the priority is that we need to stop the cuts."

"Some higher up thinks we aren't worth that money. But we clearly are—look at the impact the strike is having."

STRIKERS IN Birmingham are fighting bosses' attacks on pay and conditions

Privatisation pushing Leeds care to total collapse

HOME CARE in Leeds, West Yorkshire, stands on the brink of collapse after private firms threatened to withdraw services.

Some 12 companies are contracted to provide around 50 percent of home care services in Leeds.

This amounts to 17,500 hours of care a week.

Leeds City Council wants to increase its hourly rate by 1.6 percent.

But the care firms say

their costs have risen by 8.6 percent.

They are asking the Labour-run local authority for more cash, and are arguing for a "neighbourhood model of care" which would support service users in their own communities.

The providers are also asking for more control, arguing, "We believe a more structured and consultative approach is

essential." In a letter to the council, the bosses threatened to withdraw care from 1,500 people across the city.

The letter said the council was facing "largely poor and inadequate care" if they didn't listen to the care providers' demands.

The privatisation of social care is behind a national crisis in the sector.

The only incentive firms have to provide care

services is collecting a tidy sum in profit. When that's not feasible, they can simply walk away and make their profits somewhere else.

Instead of this system, which has led to an increasingly faltering and unstable social care sector, services should be run as part of public infrastructure and funded properly.

This would mean

replacing the chaos of the private market, in which CEO's can swing their weight around if they don't think the council contract is good enough.

Workers could be employed on decent, long-term contracts instead of the zero hours and low pay they are forced on to now.

And ordinary people could get high-quality that they need and deserve.

Sarah Bates

Home care matters