

ISRAEL LAYING SIEGE TO WEST BANK ● MORE MURDER IN GAZA

Pro-Palestine strikes in Norway and Italy ● West Bank residents speak out >>Page 16

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● **LABOUR HEADING TOWARDS ABYSS**
● **RACIST REFORM UK WAITING IN WINGS**

LEFT MUST DRIVE OUT STARMER & REEVES

**How Your Party can
come out fighting**

Analysis of conference >>Pages 4&5



INTERNATIONAL

France targets asylum seekers

THE FRENCH state is promising to help Keir Starmer's Labour with its crackdown on refugees.

Labour is pushing for French security forces to target "taxi boats"—large dinghies—before they pick up migrants from beaches in the Channel.

At least 26 people have drowned so far this year. State racism will mean more deaths.

>>Page 7

ANTI-RACISM



New challenge to far right

A NEW force against the far right has been launched.

The Together alliance is backed by cultural figures, Palestine solidarity campaigners, anti-racist organisations, trade unions and civil society organisations.

It aims to fight back against the growing division fuelled by the far right.

It is organising a major demonstration in London on 28 March next year.

>>Page 3

IN DEPTH

Young people's mental health crisis

TWO DECADES ago young people had the best mental health in Britain. Today the reverse is true.

Iain Ferguson explains why there's a crisis in young people's mental health.

And Socialist Worker speaks to young people about the reality of failing mental health services in Britain.

>>Pages 8&9



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Britain's best days are yet to come'

Labour minister Liz Kendall looks forward, not backward, upward, not forward, and always twirling, twirling, twirling towards freedom

'Lifting children out of poverty is what Labour governments do'

Labour health secretary Wes Streeting seems to have forgotten he voted to keep the two-child benefit cap last year

'Tackling child poverty is a moral duty. That's why I'm ending the two child limit—so every child has the chance to thrive'

Chancellor Rachel Reeves seems to be suffering from the same memory loss as Streeting

'I am ending the unrestricted use of taxis by asylum seekers for hospital appointments, authorising them only in the most exceptional circumstances'

Labour home secretary Shabana Mahmood finds a new way to inflict cruelty



Rotherham 12 member slams Labour's plan to scrap juries

by CAMILLA ROYLE

AN ASIAN man who was found not guilty for defending himself against fascists has slammed Labour justice secretary David Lammy's plans to scrap the bulk of jury trials.

Lammy wants to scrap juries for the vast majority of people accused of a crime.

If his plans go ahead, they will create a new tier of courts in England and Wales.

These would sit between a magistrates' court and the crown court, where cases are currently decided by a jury.

The move could mean a very different outcome in cases such as the Rotherham 12.

The Asian men were tried for violent disorder after defending themselves against fascist marchers in the south Yorkshire town in 2015.

Two pleaded guilty. The other ten were unanimously found not guilty by the jury.

They could have been jailed for up to five years.

Abrar Javid, one of the Rotherham 12 told Socialist Worker, "I'm in favour of keeping juries."

"Leaving decisions in the hands of judges is not conducive to a fair trial."

When you have a jury with a mixed demographic there is more chance of being heard.

"They are more reflective of communities, they might have similar experiences and understand the complexities and nuances."

"In my case, I was

concerned it would be an unfair hearing due to the political and media bias against Muslims in general.

"However, the jury understood the context and background of the case and showed empathy."

Judges come from very different backgrounds to most people.

Judges

Only about 5 percent of court judges in Britain are Asian and just over 1 percent are black.

Two-thirds of senior judges went to private schools, compared to 7 percent of the general population.

Abrar said judges often come from a background in the prosecution and they "see things through the prism of guilt".

Matt Foot, the co-director of the legal charity Appeal, said that these moves would "inevitably" lead to more miscarriages of justice, especially for black and Asian defendants.

LABOUR INJUSTICE secretary David Lammy

SAS war crimes evidence suppressed, inquiry hears

TWO FORMER heads of UK Special Forces suppressed evidence of possible SAS war crimes, a former high-ranking officer has told a public inquiry.

The officer was among the most senior in the special forces.

He said he had passed what he called "explosive" evidence suggesting "criminal behaviour" to the then-director special forces in 2011.

Sessions

The officer told the inquiry in closed sessions that the subsequent director special forces "clearly knew there was a problem in Afghanistan" and failed to act.

The Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan published testimony on Monday.

It is examining allegations that the SAS

murdered detainees and unarmed civilians, including children, during the West's occupation of Afghanistan in the 2000s.

It was "not just one director that has known about this", said the officer, known in evidence as N1466. He added that the UK Special Forces leadership was "very much suppressing" the allegations.

The inquiry's reporting restrictions mean the former directors accused by the officer cannot be named.

The SAS special forces

Cancer patients at risk from NHS cuts

HUNDREDS OF thousands of people in England are not getting timely tests for killer diseases because of a shortage of equipment and skilled staff.

Some 386,849 people in September had been waiting for more than six weeks for a diagnostic test for cancer, heart problems and other serious conditions.

Data from the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) shows that despite health secretary Wes Streeting's claim that the NHS is "turning a corner," the system remains in crisis.

Delays are so common that almost half of all NHS Trusts are missing the six-week target, the RCR says.

The delays are potentially devastating

Dr Stephen Harden

because patients' treatment cannot start until their illness has been properly diagnosed, it warned.

"Far too many patients are facing long, anxious waits for answers about their health. Without action, these delays will continue to put them at risk," says RCR president Dr Stephen Harden.

NHS Trusts are meant to ensure that no more than 1 percent of patients wait for more than six weeks for a test.

But that target has not been met since 2015.

AUSTERITY

Starmers says he's 'proud' of bodged budget

KEIR STARMER has tied his future as prime minister to the unpopular chancellor Rachel Reeves.

He praised the budget last week as a "moment of personal pride". His speech on Monday came as Reeves battled accusations in the media that she'd lied about the state of public finances to justify tax hikes.

Starmer and Reeves are facing opposition within the Labour government.

One minister, quoted in the Times newspaper, described the budget as "a disaster from start to finish".

The budget showed the Labour government has run out of road. It is caught between cosying up to big business and throwing a few sweeteners to voters as it plummets in the polls—and it is pleasing no one.

Reeves said she was asking "everyone to make a contribution"—but the majority of the burden falls on the shoulders of the working class.

Reeves's budget will take public tax receipts from

London anti-budget protest

£1.1 trillion to £1.5 trillion by 2031.

A headline policy—that Labour will continue the freeze on income tax thresholds—is a devastating stealth tax on the working class.

Labour's attacks didn't stop there. Reeves reiterated welfare "reforms"—a pledge to slash benefits spending through "targeted checks" and forcing people back to work.

She promised to "claw back excess profits from the use of hotels for asylum seekers"—and then phase out the scheme entirely.

Barely any of the money raised in the budget will come from the pockets of the rich.

The major change was the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap. The government says this will mean 450,000 fewer children in poverty by 2029-30.

Reeves declared the ditching of the policy which "punishes children for the circumstances of their birth".

Yet, it was Reeves who fought tooth and nail to justify keeping it after Labour was elected last year.

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New alliance calls unity march against far right

by THOMAS FOSTER

A NEW alliance will take on the threat of the far right in Britain as it surges on the streets and in the polls.

The Together alliance launched on Tuesday—and has called a major unity demonstration in London on Saturday 28 March.

It brings together over 50 organisations “against the growing division fuelled by the far right”. They include the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Friends of Al-Aqsa, two of the groups that have organised the national demonstrations against Israel’s genocide.

Bands Kneecap and Fontaines DC, musicians Paloma Faith and Charlotte Church, comedians Lenny Henry and Asim Chaudhry and actors Juliet Stevenson and Christopher Eccleston are among its backers.

Musician Leigh-Anne Pincock, formerly of Little Mix, said, “I’m standing with Together to call out far right extremism and racism for what they are—dangerous and divisive.

“We have to protect our communities, defend our freedoms and stand up to hate together.”

Divisive

Paloma Faith said she’s backing the alliance because “there is no world that I want to live in where discrimination is acceptable for anything”.

The Muslim Council of Britain, Friends of the Earth, Abortion Rights UK and many more organisations back the alliance.

The launch of Together comes at a time when the far right has gained momentum across Britain.

Nazi Tommy Robinson mobilised over 100,000 of his supporters onto the streets of London on 13 September in the largest far right demonstration in British history.



STAND UP To Racism is a key backer of the new Together alliance

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Racist Reform UK is topping opinion polls and Nigel Farage has his sights set on Downing Street.

And the two forces have supported violent and racist protests outside hotels housing refugees across Britain.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) has been at the heart of organising opposition to the fascists and far right—and was part of initiating the new alliance. It will continue to organise nationally and locally, mobilise counter-protests against the fascists and far right and say, “Refugees are welcome here.”

But the need to mobilise new forces against the far right is higher than ever. The Palestine solidarity

movement and the hundreds of thousands looking for a left alternative to Labour are key to showing that anti-racists are the majority in Britain.

If the Green Party and Your Party threw their weight behind building 28 March, it would be huge.

The TUC union federation, the Unite, Unison, CWU, NEU, PCS, UCU and NUJ unions back the new alliance.

Education and health workers and others have organised anti-racist meetings in their workplaces in the wake of 13 September. Now is the time to deepen those networks and build 28 March in the unions.

Lewis Nielsen, SUTR anti-fascist officer, told Socialist

Worker, “Together is launching to say enough is enough.

“It brings together the anti-fascist movement, the Palestine movement, trade unions and lots of other campaigns to say we’re going to put anti-racists on the front foot.

“We should go all out from now on to make 28 March massive.”

SUTR and its networks can work with other supporters of the alliance locally to build the unity demonstration on 28 March.

Organise a mobilising meeting and book transport to London before the Christmas holidays.

Let’s make the racists afraid again.

Go to togetheralliance.org.uk for more information

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oppose Nazi Tommy Robinson, Reform UK chaos in Doncaster

NAZI TOMMY Robinson has called a march in London on 13 December to “put the Christ back into Christmas”.

Anti-racists should be prepared to mobilise for a counter-protest when it’s called.

Updates on standuptoracism.org.uk

■ **DONCASTER COUNCIL’S** Reform UK leader has resigned after infighting over the reopening of Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

Guy Aston said he received “vitriolic texts that border on

abuse” because he agreed with Labour that the council had to borrow money to fund it.

In September, Reform UK councillor Dave Knight lost the party whip. He’d set up Fly Doncaster Ltd which would have profited from the reopening.

He sat on a committee that was set to examine the plan.

Another Reform UK councillor, Rachel Reed, had to step down as chair of the scrutiny committee and as deputy leader for her links to Fly Doncaster.

Campaign takes on far right’s sexism

THE WOMEN Against The Far Right campaign, initiated by Stand Up To Racism, is deepening its roots.

Activists plan a mass leafleting campaign outside the Emirates stadium in north London this Saturday, where Arsenal are playing Liverpool in a women’s football game.

It comes after vigils and protests marked the Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls last week.

Women Against the Far Right organised several events. MPs Diane Abbott and Bell Ribeiro-Addy joined Sophia Beach and other speakers who addressed a meeting of around 80 people in parliament.

Ribeiro-Addy told the meeting, “We refuse to be silent in the face of a rising tide of violence.

“People think it is

Diane Abbott MP

inevitable, but it isn’t. If we capitulate to the far right, it is illegal immigrants today, tomorrow it will be all migrants and then those born here but with the wrong skin colour.”

In Leeds, student activist Imogen told Socialist Worker that students organised a vigil because of the “rise in sexism and misogyny being seen across society”.

“It is also particularly prevalent on campuses, with levels of harassment increasing,” she said.

“The far right is pushing the narrative that their racist attacks on migrants are protecting women and girls—yet it is the far right pose the great threat to women.

“The Women Against the Far Right campaign is critical in the fightback against this narrative.”

In central London, a vigil remembered the women murdered over the past year.

And Unison union members at Camden council in north London took over a table in a cafe and gave out leaflets, stickers and posters.

★Fight Farage ★Resist Starmer

join the
SWP





Your Party conference backs calls for radical alternative

by CAMILLA ROYLE in Liverpool

AN INSURGENT vision that breaks with the status quo can be popular. That's the lesson of Zohran Mamdani's victory in New York. And it's a lesson that Your Party could learn here in Britain.

MP Zarah Sultana's speech at its conference in Liverpool electrified the conference hall. "We are not here for tweaks of a broken system but a fundamental transformation of society," she said.

The leadership's stifling of democracy and witch-hunt of the left hung over the debates (see right).

The rows flow from rival visions—is Your Party radical, insurgent and democratic or a Labour mark 2.

But the mood from many people there was marked by a determination to move beyond bitter divisions—and build Your Party as a socialist alternative.

Rachael was selected to attend the conference. She told Socialist Worker, "The left has been disenfranchised and we've been abandoned by Labour. It's become the austerity and genocide party. We need a change."

Your Party needs to get organised to back candidates in local elections and for the Welsh Senedd and the Scottish parliament next year.

They should be credible candidates with local support, implanted in social movements and campaigns.

Sweep

If it doesn't, the Green Party will sweep up votes of some of the millions who feel politically homeless and are looking to the left.

Many of those at the conference were former Labour Party members. They didn't leave Labour to join a Labour Party mark 2.

Your Party needs to break with Labour's traditions and methods.

Some of those within the leadership want to pose as the "grown up radicals". It's a politics that comes from a Labour tradition that sees elections as more important than what happens outside parliament.

It would mean bowing to pressure

BACK STORY

Your Party conference comes after months of bitter infighting and confusion

● Some 9,000 people voted in person and online, but this falls far short of the 800,000 who registered initial interest

● Your Party must learn the lessons of the left in Europe and break from Labourism

to tone down left wing messages in a search for votes. The party should relate to trade unionists.

It should be a home for workers taking action—and it should build and champion their struggles on the picket line.

But it shouldn't focus its efforts on the trade union bureaucracy, the people at the top of the unions. This can be a conservative force that holds back struggle and is prone to compromise.

The new party should learn the lessons of left wing electoral projects across Europe.

Spyridon, originally from Greece and based in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, told Socialist Worker, "I want to make sure we don't make the same mistakes we did in Greece".

"Alexis Tsipras destroyed branches when he got into government. What we need is a mass movement to fight Keir Starmer's Labour."

The left wing coalition Syriza was elected in Greece in 2015 with Tsipras as prime minister. It demobilised the grassroots organisations that helped it get into office.

And eventually it would capitulate to the European Union's demands for austerity.

Some 55,000 have joined Your Party and about 9,000 took part in the key votes. It's a far cry from the 800,000 people who said they were interested in joining.

Many will have been turned off by the spats, public rows and internal divisions of an organisation that wasn't even fully founded.

The task is to turn outwards and build a fighting organisation that champions socialist policies and builds workers' struggles.



THE CONFERENCE took place in Liverpool last weekend following rallies on Friday evening

New left is pro-trans rights and anti-Zionist. It will fight the far right

MEMBERS OF Your Party want an organisation that fights for liberation for all of the oppressed and doesn't leave anyone behind.

And one that is a voice for the movements against austerity, against the far right and for freedom for Palestine. It won't shy away from standing up for oppressed people because it might be "contentious".

Members voted for opposition to oppression to be part of its principles by 88.6 percent and by 68.5 percent for it to explicitly talk about trans+ liberation.

Camden Unison union branch secretary Liz Wheatley got loud cheers for her conference speech. She said her branch had been on every national trans+ pride demonstration since they started.

And they march every time fascist Tommy Robinson tries to mobilise.

She said, "Women's rights are not undermined by trans+ people having rights."

"If we all fight together we will all win more rights. Trans men are men, trans women are women, non-binary and gender fluid people exist and deserve to be respected."



Attendees argued for a strong stance supporting trans+ rights

During the lunch break on Sunday local Palestine activists held a rally outside against the ongoing genocide, with drums and chants of "We will rise from the rubble."

Student Brechan was also hopeful about the possibility of building a movement that could defend refugees and take on the racism of Reform UK.

He said, "There is so much appetite—people are

so desperate for something like this. But the infighting shows why people are so tired of politicians."

Rana told Socialist Worker that Your Party could "vocalise the movement for Palestine and bring attention to the cause".

She said, "It's really important to have a different narrative from within parliament" when Zionism is so prominent.

Ritchie added that Your Party could amplify causes such as demanding freedom for the Filton 24, some of whom are on hunger strike in prison after taking action against arms sales to Israel.

Carl from west London told Socialist Worker he was "terrified that in five years Nigel Farage is going to be prime minister".

He said the rise of Reform UK made it more dangerous for people like him.

Scott from Buckinghamshire said it was time ordinary people had a say in their lives. He told Socialist Worker he had always been a socialist but not been politically involved. "Now is the time for me to make things happen", he said.



AROUND 2,000 Your Party members were selected by sortition lottery to attend the party's first conference
Many delegates were fighting for a party that builds and champions workers' struggles, supports trans+ rights and is anti-Zionist

Pictures: Gary McMATH

Leadership loses key votes— what were the results?

AS ATTENDEES arrived in Liverpool last Friday, emails were dropping into the inboxes of Socialist Workers Party (SWP) members expelling them from Your Party.

Its members had yet to vote on a key amendment that would allow dual membership with other organisations such as the SWP.

Mish Rahman from the Democratic Bloc for Your Party stood up against this witch-hunt of socialists by figures within the party's bureaucracy.

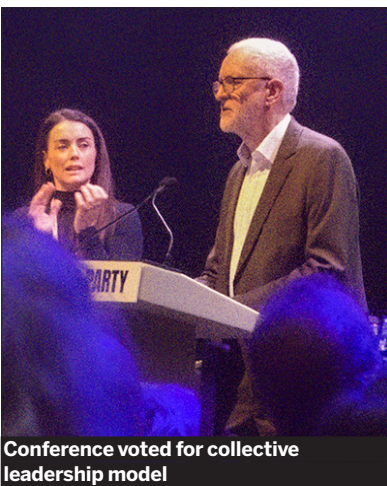
It will have reminded many of the way the Labour Party used false accusations of antisemitism against its own members.

Tolerated

Mish told Socialist Worker, "Factional attempts to exclude parts of the left by the flick of a pen cannot be tolerated in a democratic socialist party. It's unacceptable."

The Peace and Justice Project, founded by Jeremy Corbyn, advised its supporters to vote against dual membership.

But Your Party members backed it in a vote by 69.2 percent. The leadership of Your Party will still get to decide which organisations are allowed.



Conference voted for collective leadership model

There was a narrower vote, 51.6 percent, in favour of a model of collective leadership rather than a single leader. This went against the current leadership too.

Members of Your Party want to see something different from other parties. And they want it to be democratic and member-led.

Socialist Worker supported collective leadership and we want both Corbyn and Sultana to be part of it.

Incredibly, some sections of

Corbyn's camp urged members to vote against the final constitution and political statement because they lost.

But members voted to endorse them. It would be highly damaging for Your Party to emerge from this weekend with neither of those.

A Your Party member at the conference tried to argue for a motion that would have allowed the conference to elect a caretaker leadership. But she was not allowed to speak.

The motion recognised that the existing leadership, dominated by the Independent MPs, has damaged the party.

Members voted by nearly 57 percent for a more targeted approach to selecting election candidates, rather than for an amendment that emphasised standing widely.

They voted for future conferences to have online voting open to all members.

And for some people to be selected to attend the conference by a sortition as well as having branch delegates.

Socialist Worker supported empowering branches to choose their delegates.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

UNION LEADERS U-TURN ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

LABOUR'S EMPLOYMENT Rights Bill was one of the few positives trade unionists could look to. With a government that has attacked disabled people and the elderly, pushed racism and supported genocide, Labour supporting union leaders could still point to the Employment Rights Bill.

At the TUC union federation conference in September, its leader Paul Nowak demanded Labour get the Bill over the line.

Now the Bill has been gutted after a deal cooked up by those same union leaders.

Labour had promised workers the right to claim unfair dismissal from day one of employment. It's a key demand that could give workers protection if bosses try to hound them out of a job.

Employers would have to give their reasons for sacking someone and follow a fair process for all their employees.

It would protect workers in industries with high staff turnover, such as hospitality.

The government has dropped this in an attempt to appease bosses who want to be able to hire and fire at will.

Workers will no longer have to wait two years to receive their full rights.

But they will have to wait six months. It is not the "day one" rights Labour promised in its manifesto.

Bosses and the Tories are crowing about the U-turn and demanding Labour drops even more of its pledges.

Labour's backsliding followed backroom discussions between six unnamed union figures and bosses' representatives. They met to try to force a compromise after the Bill was stalled.

A source in one of the unions told the BBC the "vast majority of unions" present at discussions were comfortable with the U-turn. The TUC also welcomed the deal—although Sharon Graham, the leader of the Unite union, has stood up against it.

Union leaders will sometimes feel the pressure to fight for the rights of their members.

But the role of those leaders is distinct from that of the workers they represent. They are there to do deals with the employers and reach a compromise. Those deals often fall short of what could have been won.

Most union leaders are tied to the Labour Party. They are deeply wedded to Labourism, an ideology that claims social change comes through the election of Labour governments.

Your Party wants to work with the unions. But if it is to avoid becoming another version of the Labour Party, the new party shouldn't put its trust in the leaders of those unions.

Much more struggle in the workplaces and more solidarity on the picket lines could start to turn things around.

Ordinary workers getting organised could shift the balance of power towards workers and away from the bullying bosses.

STRIKE TO SAVE NHS

THOUSANDS OF resident doctors are set to for five days from 17 December. Formerly known as junior doctors, workers are battling Labour for job security and pay.

They took similar action last month to demand Labour coughs up the cash needed to revive the NHS.

The doctors' strike is crucial for all those who want to defend the health service against the onslaught of austerity and privatisation that has brought it to its knees.

This is because a win for doctors has far reaching consequences. It has the potential to strengthen the struggle of other workers in the NHS, such as porters, cleaners and nurses.

But, it can also act as a shining example to all those fighting back against Labour's attacks of what can be achieved through working class struggle.

That's why the doctors' picket lines must become a focus for trade unionists and campaigners.

But it should also become a focus for all those signed up to Your Party who believe it could be a radical and insurgent organisation rooted in grassroots movements.

Your Party must be a lever that amplifies struggle and champions mass movements. That means backing the doctors' strike.

Get down to the picket lines and show your support.

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Reeves on the brink of ruin over 'lies' row

KEIR STARMER and Rachel Reeves really are the gang that couldn't shoot straight. After all the fuss before Reeves unveiled her budget last week, there's a new row over whether she lied about the government's financial plight.

Starmer and Reeves's original sin was to lock the government into appeasing the financial markets. They committed themselves to rules on taxing and spending intended to bring the two into balance by 2028-9. This, in turn, put them in hock to the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR), which regularly reports on how far or close they are to meeting their self-imposed target.

At the beginning of November, the Treasury started to brief that the OBR's projections were so bad that Reeves would have to break an election promise not to raise the rate of income tax. She strongly hinted at this in a specially scheduled speech on 4 November.

Then, on 13 November, the Financial Times newspaper leaked the news that Reeves no longer planned to do this. The market in gilts—British government bonds—briefly crashed. We were told that this was because of a last-minute report by the OBR that the public finances were in a better state than Reeves had implied.

But, after the budget, the OBR revealed it had told Reeves at the end of October that she would hit her target with a £4.2 billion surplus. It was true that the OBR had cut its projection for productivity growth, but this was more than compensated by higher tax revenues thanks to rising wages and prices.

So, did Reeves present an unnecessarily gloomy picture before the budget? Her defence is that the productivity figures were bad, but this doesn't explain why she forgot about the higher tax revenues. But the mess she has got herself into isn't just a function of Reeves's considerable political ineptitude. It reflects the bind she and Starmer are caught in.

Bungled

As we've seen, their priority is to appease the financial markets. Reeves says, probably correctly, that these would have found the £4.2 billion surplus too narrow a safety margin. So, she either had to cut spending or raise taxes.

But cutting spending too savagely was dangerous given the state of permanent semi-rebellion on the Labour back benches. Indeed, Reeves had to find an extra £10 billion to cover the cost of maintaining disability benefits, winter fuel payments and scrapping the two-child benefit cap. These measures were all effectively imposed on a weak government by its backbenchers.

So, higher taxes it had to be. Touching the banks and the wealthy was ruled out by the government's efforts to curry favour with big business. Investment bank JP Morgan boss, Jamie Dimon, pointedly waited until after the budget to announce the banking giant's plan to build a new tower at Canary Wharf.

Hence the proposal to break Labour's election pledge not to raise the rate of income tax. But, after the bungled attempt by Starmer's office to scare off potential leadership rivals, he and Reeves lost their nerve and backed down in the face of back bench fury. What they did instead was even worse.

Rishi Sunak in 2021 stopped raising income tax thresholds in line with inflation. Reeves is continuing this freeze till 2031. As wages rise, more people will have to start paying income tax or even move into the higher band. The Resolution Foundation estimates that this will hit poorer households worse than a 1p rise in the basic rate of income tax.

But never mind, the markets are happy. As the Financial Times put it, "investors are accentuating the positive—taxes are going up pretty sharply—the kind of rectitude that investors lending to the government like to see. And the chancellor has boosted the buffer against future unpleasant surprises." Gilt prices have been steady since the budget.

Commentators point out that the worst pain in the budget—the threshold freeze—has been back-loaded towards the end of the decade, when the next election is due.

Starmer and Reeves no doubt hope that a cunning wheeze will allow them somehow to escape this trap. But they'll surely shoot themselves in the feet, probably sooner rather than later.

LETTERS

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

The Autumn Budget means attacks on disabled people

LABOUR chancellor Rachel Reeves' Autumn Budget has further confirmed the capitulation to Reform UK's myths about disabled people.

These are now at the heart of the Labour Party's agenda.

Within the budget, the phrase used to justify changes to Universal Credit was to prevent it going to those who are "undeserving".

They say this is so it doesn't "pay to be sick".

But nobody who has worked professionally, or has experience of disability,

would suggest that people off long term sick are living in the lap of luxury.

The Access to Work scheme, which funds specialist equipment and adaptations for businesses to help people work, has an outstanding backlog.

This exceeds 60,000 applications, as of February 2025.

And delayed payments to businesses for adaptations is deepening the systemic hurdles to recruiting disabled people.

Some applicants have waited over 254 days for the equipment they need to

return to the workplace.

Those who are unable to work due to health conditions are facing a backlog in excess of 1 million people for mental health services.

Reduction

This is added to by a reduction in outpatient services overall and a crisis in accessing GPs.

Reform UK's Richard Tice and Nigel Farage push myths around people being off work with what they consider "minor" health issues, such as anxiety and ADHD.

But, when untreated

and unsupported, these conditions can move from manageable to debilitating.

The changes to the Motability Scheme, which supports disabled people in getting transportation, mean even more disabled people will be losing vital access to their community.

This will put their wellbeing at risk and further reduce the likelihood of many disabled people from ever finding work.

Communities will be further separated from disabled and carer members.

Euan Mitchell
Glasgow

Stop racist attacks on schools

IN SCOTLAND, the far right has been targeting schools.

At least three schools have been targeted by far right figures who are attempting to spread misinformation.

In Renfrew, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course was cancelled.

In Dalmarnock, in Glasgow, parents—whipped up by far right misinformation—protested outside a primary school. ESOL classes there were for mums whose children attend the school.

A school in Inverness had to cancel a play following threats. The play had a scene where Santa encouraged children to understand hardships faced by Syrian refugees.

But the attacks are not isolated. Classroom-based adult education spending has reduced by two-thirds since 2003-04.

At the same time, Keir Starmer plans tougher language requirements for those applying to extend their visa or settle in Britain.

We have to condemn the attacks for what they are—racism and threats to education.

Alex Mayers
Glasgow



Abortion rights are on the line internationally

DONALD TRUMP has designated NHS abortions as a human rights violation.

Gender-affirming care for children, laws against hate speech and the "facilitation of mass migration" have also been categorised as such.

United States secretary of state Marco Rubio claimed it is to refocus on "natural rights" that have been "given to us by God".

Religious framing is an excuse to roll-back women's rights, like the Republican's achieved by overturning Roe v Wade in 2022.

We have already seen an increase in this rhetoric in Britain.

More women are being prosecuted for abortions, whilst US anti-abortion groups are campaigning here.

This report gives far right figures like Tommy Robinson and Nick Tenconi ammunition to attack women's bodily autonomy.

It is imperative we fight back against Trump, Nigel Farage and anyone who wants to control what women can do with their bodies.

Emily Poole
East London

Orwell hijack defies belief

THE HIJACKING of left wing George Orwell has reached new levels.

The Orwell Foundation was set up "to promote Orwell's values of bravery, integrity, decency and fidelity to truth".

But now it has installed veteran right winger Michael Gove to its homelessness committee.

This is so obscene it really defies belief.

Gove was a senior member of Tory governments that increased homelessness.

Poor George would be spitting blood.

John Newsinger
Brighton



Starmmer pushes France to join his attacks on asylum seekers

French president Emmanuel Macron has promised to target small boats in the English Channel. But this will put even more lives in grave danger, says **Thomas Foster**

THE FRENCH state is promising to help Labour with its crackdown on refugees crossing the English Channel.

French security forces will soon target “taxi boats”—large dinghies—before they pick up migrants from beaches in the Channel.

The move comes after months of pressure from Keir Starmmer, who is copying racist Reform UK.

The prime minister wrote to the French president Emmanuel Macron last week to persuade him of the plan.

Starmmer’s said, “It is essential that we deploy these tactics this month,” claiming, “We have no effective deterrent in the Channel.”

Around 40,000 people have made the dangerous journey across the Channel so far this year, fleeing hardship, war and persecution.

Obsession

They are forced to cross this way because the British state refuses to provide safe and legal routes.

This number is around 0.06 percent of Britain’s population.

So why the obsession with “stopping the boats”? It is fuelled by the racist logic of blaming migrants and refugees for Britain’s problems.

The operations will begin at sea initially and then be carried out in ports and inland channels.

So far this year, at least 26 people have died during crossing attempts. The real number is likely to be higher, given the difficulty of tracking such figures.

Most deaths currently occur near the coastline.

NORWAY

Oslo strikes for Palestine

THOUSANDS OF workers in Norway walked out of workplaces last Thursday as part of a two-hour political strike for Palestine.

The political strike was organised by the Oslo region of the LO union federation.

John Thomas Suhr is leader of the Oslo-Askerhus branch of the HK union for shop and office workers, which has over 19,000 members. “Today is a historic moment in Norway,” he told Socialist Worker.

“For as long as I’ve been active in the union, we haven’t had a political strike as part

of an international solidarity movement. There was broad participation from all the public and private sector unions for the strike.”

Mathis, a shop steward at a building firm, told Socialist Worker, “All kinds of trades were there because the strike was called by the central union. “That allows you to organise all those people who are interested in social justice, not just people on the left.”

John said he felt that the labour movement in Norway had been “inspired” by the general strikes in Italy. “Something is spreading,” he said.

The Care4Calais charity has successfully challenged prior attempts to stop boats at sea.

Its chief executive, Steve Smith, said, “This is a dangerous moment, which will cost more lives. Intercepting boats whilst they are in the water has never been done before because it puts people at risk.

“When the last Tory government tried to conduct pushbacks in the Channel, Care4Calais launched a legal challenge—and won.

“Any attempt to do something similar on the French side of the Channel must also face opposition.

“The only way to stop Channel crossings is to create safe routes for people to claim asylum in Britain.”

Arthur Dos Santos, from the refugee charity Utopia56, has attacked measures where the police enter the sea as “dangerous”.

He said, “When police enter the sea, it will cause more deaths, more people will drown as they try to get away before being caught and forced back to the beach.”

Palestine solidarity

THOUSANDS OF striking workers and their supporters took to the streets for Palestine last week

ITALY

Greta joins dockers in Genoa walkout

TENS OF thousands of workers joined Italy’s strike for Palestine and better working conditions last week.

It marks the third general strike for Palestine this year. Trade unions such as USB and Si Cobas, which are independent of the major trade union federations, led the way.

The strikes shut down transport services across Italy.

“In Florence, around 4,000 people protested against Italy’s participation in the genocide,” USB union member Roberto told Socialist Worker.

In Milan, around 15,000 rallied behind a banner reading, “No to war finance and rearmament, let’s raise wages and social spending.”

Italian prime minister, fascist

Giorgia Meloni, is pushing through a “war time” budget, freezing the wages of all workers while increasing military spending to over £28 billion.

As well as Palestine, workers were “striking against endless working hours and excessive disciplinary proceedings”.

Wholeheartedly

In Genoa, north Italy, striking dock workers in Si Cobas were joined by Greta Thunberg on the picket lines. “I wholeheartedly stand with and behind the striking workers from SI Cobas,” she said.

Francesca Albanese, UN special rapporteur for Palestine, joined the picket line.

At the Port of Livorno, dockers

in the autonomous workers group have been leading the way shutting down ports in solidarity with Palestine.

“Rearmament is not a safety measure—it is a political choice of this capitalist system that makes us complicit in a genocide and turns war into normality,” one striker said from the picket lines.

Elsewhere, strikers and activists targeted Leonardo, the biggest weapons producer in Italy.

In Tessera, Venice, police attacked protesters with water cannons as they blockaded the Leonardo factory there.

At the protest, one striker said, “We’re striking against the war, against this false ceasefire.”

THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND A SYSTEM THAT BETRAYS THE YOUNG

Iain Ferguson explains why Britain is facing a crisis in children and young people's mental health. And Yuri Prasad spoke to young people about the terrible reality of mental health services in Britain

TWO DECADES ago young people had the best mental health of any age group in Britain. Today the reverse is true. Now, 34 percent of people aged between 18 and 24 years old report symptoms of "common mental disorders", such as anxiety or depression. This figure rises to 41 percent among young women.

So it's not an exaggeration to talk of a crisis in mental health affecting young people. Nor is the crisis confined to older teenagers and young adults.

Mental health referrals for children and young people in England have been rising since before the pandemic. They increased from 340,000 in 2017-18 to 540,000 in 2019-20.

Last year, the number of children and young people with active referrals soared to 949,000. A report by the Centre for Young Lives revealed that, as of 2024, 32,000 children had been waiting more than two years to be seen by mental health services.

It also found that most children were not directed to any form of interim support for self-harm and suicide prevention while they waited.

The report showed that after years of funding cuts, thresholds for intervention are so high that even suicidal children are frequently turned away from the services they need.

So what lies behind this crisis?

The hard right wants us to believe that it's a symptom of a "snowflake generation" unable or unwilling to handle the stresses of everyday life.

And many centrist politicians, such



The crisis is hitting younger children

as Labour's former work and pensions secretary Liz Kendall, have tailed them.

She responded to the huge rise in unemployment among young people in recent years by claiming that too many benefit claimants were "taking the Mickey".

'Snowflake'

A report published in July of this year shows such arguments to be without foundation.

Commissioned by the Youth Futures Foundation and conducted by academics from Manchester University and UCL, it is the most comprehensive research into this crisis to date.

Addressing the "snowflake" argument, the authors argue that "this research

provides evidence that the increase of young people with a mental health problem (or decline in young people's mental health) is real". It's "not merely a result of increased symptom recognition, greater awareness, overdiagnosis or reduced resilience", the report argues.

"Our analysis points to a genuine rise in mental distress among young people."

Among the key factors contributing to that rise, they identify financial insecurity—including short-term job contracts, as well as the inability to find satisfying work were a key factor. Reduced access to non-clinical services was a key factor, and sleep disturbance was also found to make a significant impact.

However, they say social media use makes only a "small impact".

The reference to non-clinical services is important.

Children and young people's services, alongside other community services such as libraries and community centres, have been amongst the main victims of austerity policies since 2010.

So the report correctly stresses the importance of young people's support hubs for their mental health.

However, as Socialist Worker reported recently, many of these hubs are now facing closure as the result of the latest cuts.

The truth is that protecting the mental health of children and young people—and improving the services on offer to them—will require the kind of fightback against disability cuts that we saw earlier this year.

Then, massive opposition forced the government into a humiliating retreat.

But we need to go further than

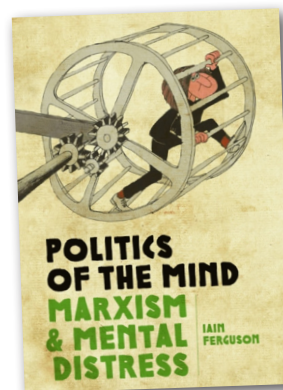
The turmoil many young people experience is not a product of 'broken brains' but a broken society (above) Iain Ferguson's book (below) makes the case for a broader view of mental health

fighting for services. The dominant psychiatric model would have us believe that what it calls "mental disorders" are caused by dysfunctional brains. And the response to this anomaly is usually some form of medication.

By contrast, what the Youth Futures Foundation report and similar research show and what I argue in my book, is that the roots of mental distress lie not in people's brains but in the conditions created by a capitalist society.

And, as millions of young people across Africa and Asia are currently showing in the so-called Gen Z protests, the most effective response to that rotten system is not Prozac, but revolution.

Iain Ferguson is the author of *Politics of The Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress*, available from Bookmarks bookshop, £9.99

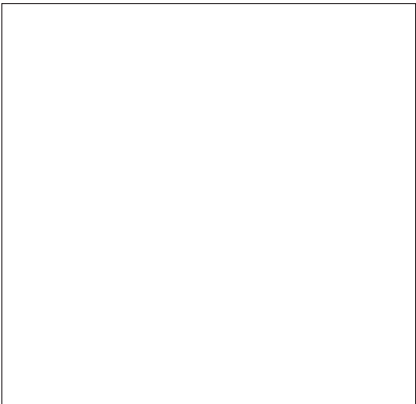


'Accessing services was made to feel like an audition'

Anna, from Cumbria

ANNA WAS struggling with her mental health from around 12 years old and she was referred to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). It diagnosed her with anxiety and depression and later, an eating disorder.

"CAMHS significantly worsened



Early intervention services make a difference

and girls,” she said. “They often refer to your symptoms as a ‘phase,’ or they say this is ‘hormonal,’ or that this is ‘just part of being a woman.’

“I’ve heard that phrase quite a few times.”

There needs to be a big increase in funding for services, but Anna argued it will take a more fundamental change in society to improve young people’s mental health.

“There are other factors,” she said. “The conditions that we live in just create more ill health. I was in group therapy until last year and the problems that people were bringing up, a lot of them would be helped if they had secure housing.”

‘Cuts can mean sitting around doing nothing for a whole week. That doesn’t help when you’re on an acute psych ward’

Anya, London

ANYA WAITED for more than a year for an initial appointment when she first sought help for her mental health problems aged 14 years old.

“Getting into therapy takes way longer than getting an initial appointment. I was 17 by the time I was seen,” she told Socialist Worker.

“When I first went in, they gave me a working diagnosis of ADHD, autism, then borderline personality disorder and then OCD traits.

“And every time I went back, they would change the diagnosis. That happens to a lot of people, but particularly to women, especially when they are young.”

The long wait for treatment made her situation worse, said Anya, who is now 22 years old and has spent time on mental health wards.

“I’ve had experiences when I’m under section (when the state deems you should be detained under the Mental Health Act) when, because of staff cuts, they’ve had no occupational therapy because they don’t have a therapist in the building.

“That means the whole week you don’t have any therapy, except for our one ward round, which is for about 30 minutes on a Monday.

“So we’re all sat around doing nothing, which doesn’t help when you’re on an acute psych ward.”

Anya explained that mental health services often have an approach that blames individuals for their own

problems. “The model they have doesn’t actually help,” she said.

“They put a lot of it on you. They’re like, well, you can’t get better if you don’t want to.”

‘A lot of young people come into hospital having had no access to mental health services until they’d hit crisis point’

Erica, mental health worker, north west England

ERICA WORKS in schools as part of a mental health early intervention programme. She told Socialist Worker that her own experiences of poor care as a young person are part of what motivates her.

“I struggled with my mental health and I got no support from CAMHS. It was only when I turned 18 did that change. And then, the only support I was offered was medication,” she said.

“It shouldn’t be like that, because you’re treating the symptoms, you’re not treating the cause.

“If we had readily available mental health support for young people, it could stop the escalation. And people might not have to grow into adults that struggle with their mental health without support.”

Before working on mental health in schools, Erica was based in hospitals.

“I saw a lot of young people come into hospital that hadn’t had any access to mental health services until they’d hit crisis point,” she said. “And being admitted to hospital just made things worse for them.

Unsafe

“They were traumatised and it was just unnecessary.

“We were so underfunded and understaffed that it was dangerous to even work there.

“Then you think about these poor young people who have been struggling, not getting any help, and then reaching crisis point and been put into hospitals which are unsafe.

“How is that fair?”

Erica said poor care also increases the danger of suicide and self-harm.

“Everyone who starts working in mental health wants to help people. They want to be able to do therapeutic things,” she said.

“When you physically can’t do that and you can’t even effectively manage risk, it’s like, what are we doing for these young people?”

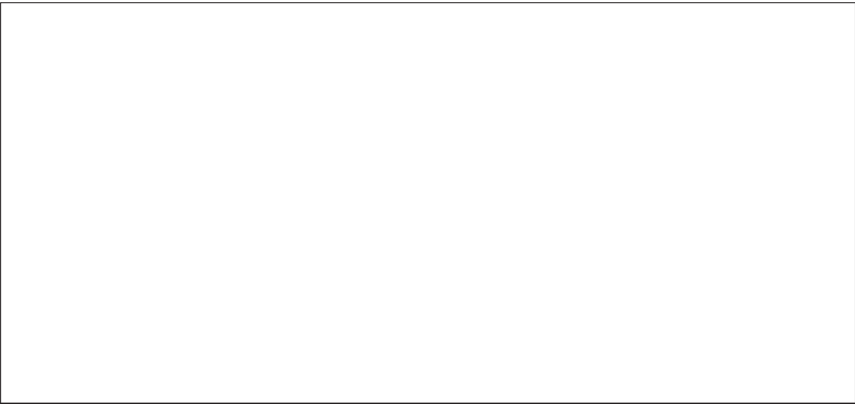
“We’ve brought them into hospital, which is traumatising in itself, and then we can’t even treat them.”

There needs to be a massive increase in funding for mental healthcare, explained Erica. And, she said she knows exactly where it should go.

“Early intervention. 100 percent,” she said firmly.

“That could stop the escalation. It could stop the amount of young people who later develop unhealthy coping mechanisms, like self-harm.

“We could break that cycle.”



Youth clubs offered a place where young people could socialise but most have been cut

my mental health,” she told Socialist Worker. “I think it was massively underfunded.

“I remember when I was 15 years old, I had tried to kill myself and they had no beds in the adolescent mental health unit. They were annoyed at me because they didn’t know what to do with me.”

Anna said, “CAMHS therapists told me that I couldn’t be depressed because I was wearing makeup and that I was not skinny enough to be anorexic.

“That certainly made my eating disorder a lot worse because I felt like, oh, this is a competition now. I need to eat even less, because then they’ll believe me.”

Services did not improve after she turned 18 years old.“The mental health services that I accessed into my adulthood were a mixed bag, but they felt like an audition,” she said.

Diagnosis

“I got diagnosed with borderline personality disorder when I was 19. Whenever I got referred to mental health services, they saw my diagnosis and said, ‘Oh, we don’t treat that. That’s too difficult. You’re too difficult.’”

Anna thought that we need to challenge embedded attitudes in mental health services.

“I think there’s a lot wrong, especially the way they treat women



Reform UK MP Lee Anderson regularly insults young people as ‘snowflakes’ (top) Meanwhile, Labour’s Liz Kendall thinks young people on disability benefits are ‘taking the Mickey’ (above)

IN THE run up to Rachel Reeves' budget, media outlet after media outlet churned out articles speculating about how "the market" would react.

They spoke of "the market" as if it's a mystical, all-powerful beast that must be satisfied.

This influence of financial markets on this government isn't an accident, but has been enabled by the balancing act that Labour has set itself.

Its commitment to fiscal rules, such as the promise to reduce government debt, means the bond markets have come to dominate.

These are markets that trade government bonds—IOUs that governments sell to investors to borrow money.

Ideologically, social democratic parties often wield the threat of a revolt on the financial markets to dampen the expectations of their supporters.

Their threats are usually exaggerated to suit party leaders' need. Even so, the dangers can be very real.

We can look back to what happened to former Tory prime minister Liz Truss' government in autumn 2022.

She announced huge tax cuts for bosses and the rich, paid for by a significant increase in government debt. It provoked a huge market backlash, causing the value of government bonds to collapse and cost of state borrowing to soar.

Pension funds, many of which have large investments in government bonds, nearly went bankrupt. Truss was humiliated and resigned as prime minister.

THERE IS an alternative strategy. But to know how bond markets can be beaten, it is necessary to understand how they function.

A bond is effectively a promise to pay. A government issues a bond and sells it for, say, £100 to an investor that purchases it.

In return, the government promises to pay back the full price of the bond at a certain future date, making fixed regular interest payments along the way.

For example, it could be £10 a year on a bond worth £100—a rate of 10 percent. This rate must be competitive with interest rates offered by other investments if anyone is to buy it.

Bond interest rates can be influenced in the short run by interest rates set by central banks such as the Bank of England.

The purpose of a government selling a bond is to raise funds to cover the difference

between how much money the government gets from taxes and how much it spends.

After a bond has been issued by the government, investors can trade it. Prices can go up and down and a market of commercial banks, central banks, pension funds and overseas investors, is established.

We should ignore the mystifications—these markets just express the interests of corporations and traders. When investors don't want to buy



“Mystifications aside, markets simply express corporations' interests

THE TRADING of government debt can be a crucial limitation on radical policies

MONEY TALKS HOW TO BEAT BOND MARKETS

Financial markets discipline all governments—and even the aspirations of their supporters. But, argues Thomas Foster, their mystical grip on the economy can be conquered

Rachel Reeves

upping interest payments to keep investors on side. The result? The government pays more to borrow money, creating higher government debt and violating its self-imposed fiscal rules.

This impacts the national budget—higher debt interest payments means less room for other spending. So instead of more money for nurses and teachers, more money goes into the pockets of wealthy bankers and investors.

This shows the disciplining power of bond markets, through their integration with the state. They can threaten debt crises if they view debt-financed government spending to be too high.

There are trends that have heightened the influence bond markets have on the state.

Government borrowing has soared since 2008, with significant increases in debt interest costs—trends worsened by rising inflation and weak growth.

Currently, government debt sits at £2.9 trillion, close to 100 percent of gross domestic production (GDP).

In 2008, it was 36 percent of GDP. Of this £2.9 trillion debt, £2.6 trillion is in outstanding government bonds.

Overseas investors hold 31 percent of these bonds. These volatile investors will happily sell British government bonds if they can get a better deal elsewhere.

And yearly debt interest spending reached £106 billion for the 2024-25 financial year. At 8 percent of total government spending, it means nearly £1 out of every £10 spent is spent on interest.

Labour wants to fill this "fiscal black hole". But as Marxist economist Michael Robert said, "The trouble is that this hole is imaginary."

"It's in the minds of the government and the financial sector and it varies in size depending on how fast the British economy is growing."

The issue is that the British economy is stagnating, trapped in low profitability.

"This is reflected in low productivity growth, a mass of unprofitable zombie firms undermining investment, intensifying class inequality, unstable accumulations of credit and bloated, fragile financial systems," writes Marxist economist Joseph Choonara.

Amid stagnation, government debt has grown hugely, and with it, the power of bond markets. Yet financial markets should be taken on, not conceded to as Labour is doing.

One way to do this is to increase the tax base of the government—higher tax revenues would reduce the need to borrow.

bonds from the government, decreasing demand, or start selling the bonds they hold, increasing supply, it lowers prices.

If a price of an existing bond goes down, new investors can pay less for it and get more of a return on each pound invested. It means that when the government issues new bonds, investors can demand higher rates of return.

As states rely on bonds to finance spending, it must keep

In other words, a sizable tax on the rich and bosses' profits would mean less need for the government to issue bonds to cover the difference between revenue and spending.

Such a tax is entirely possible. The Office for Budget Responsibility's own forecast found that the effective tax rate on labour income sits at 40 percent. The effective tax rate on corporate profits sits at 17 percent. An equalisation of this would bring in huge sums of money for the government.

Another way is the democratisation of banks.

A banking system made up of a network of publicly-owned, co-operative or community banks, could undermine the influence of capitalist firms and traders.

These banks could act as large domestic sources of finance for the government, which could mandate or incentivise such banks to hold government bonds.

Currently, multinational commercial banks can lead the bond sell-offs that cause borrowing costs to spike. A democratised banking system would change the make-up of who holds government debt. It would break up the private sector's power to affect bond interest rates.

A government can also implement capital and exchange controls — restrictions on the flow of money or goods.

It could implement limits on money transfers abroad or conversions of domestic currency into foreign currency. A requirement could be set for foreign money to stay in the country for a certain time period.

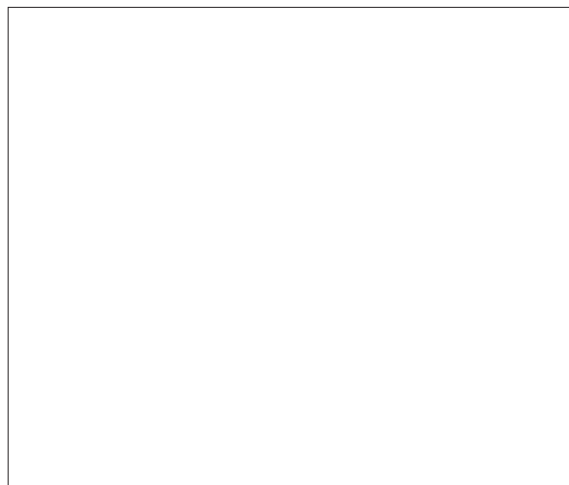
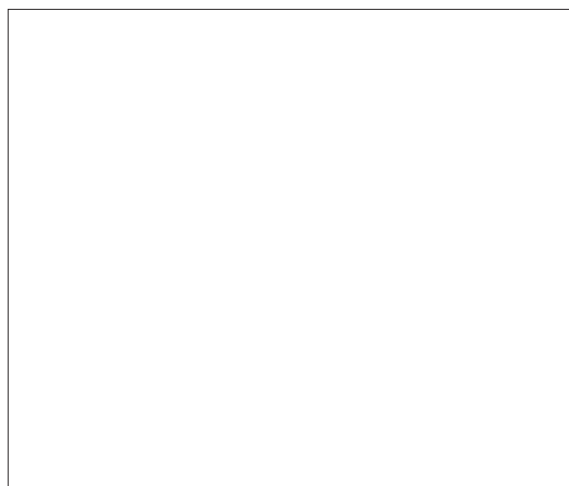
This stops investors from punishing the government by rapidly exiting the country and driving bond rates sharply up.

Instead, the selling is contained within the domestic system, minimising the impact of investors taking their money away.

It could establish administrative approvals for overseas sales of government bonds, or transaction taxes on bond trades that makes selling them more expensive.

These policies could work to undermine the capacity of firms and traders to exert power over the government.

But they would also be taken by the capitalist class as a declaration of war. The bosses



Infamous bond market victim, and Britain's shortest-serving prime minister, Liz Truss (top) A mass movement in Greece tried to resist savage cuts in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis (above)

and the rich would carry out a heavy assault on any political party that adopted these policies, doing everything they could to destroy it.

Resisting these attacks, and to reach a point where these policies could be feasible, would require a shift in the balance of class forces.

This would mean a mass movement of working class people, without which any left government would remain isolated and weak. It would mean building up power beyond any state institutions such as parliament.

Mass struggle on the streets—and crucially in workplaces through strikes—could force concessions from the capitalist class.

It would create a fear of working class action that would force the capitalist class into compromise. If workers could take power into their hands, such as in the financial sector, it could push through the changes.

All this give rises to the potential to go beyond financial markets altogether. It could break the whole system of profit and remove the power of the bosses and the rich.



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM
with Judy Cox

Why students can spark struggle against the system

FOR MUCH of history, universities educated those “born to rule” and trained a narrow layer of professionals.

This meant that the overwhelming majority of students identified with the establishment.

During the General Strike of 1926, hundreds of students volunteered as strike breakers.

This began to shift dramatically after the Second World War, due to changes in how capitalism was managed.

As the system developed, it required a higher level of science, technology and skill beyond what was needed in earlier phases of industrialisation.

This saw a rapid increase in higher education during the 1960s. For example, in 1950 only 3 percent of people who left school went to university, but that rose to 8 percent in the following 20 years.

Universities became the main way in which the middle classes could transmit their social status from generation to generation. But more working class people were allowed in for the first time.

Trends

This was combined with broader trends in capitalism during the “long boom” after the war. Politicians told the working class they’d “never had it so good”—yet many demanded more.

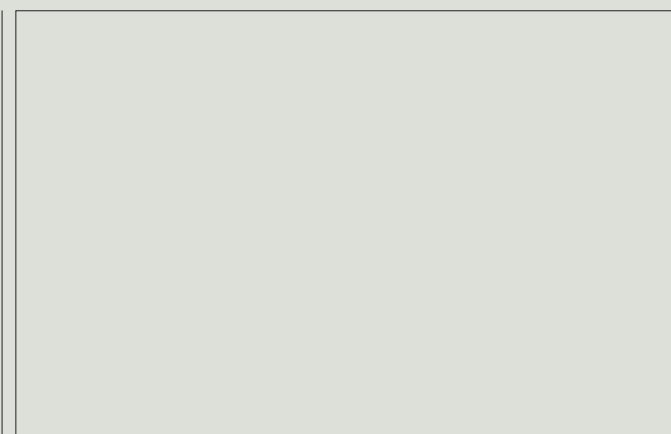
And many people began questioning parts of ruling class ideology, for example, traditional notions about a “woman’s role” in the family.

These sorts of changes preceded the sudden explosion of struggles in 1968. Across the globe, students rose up against the Vietnam War, racism and the system.

In France, the student revolt inspired millions of workers to fight back and organise a general strike.

Marxists had to analyse the role students were playing in a global wave of revolt. Some radicals argued that students could replace the working class as the social force that could carry out a revolution.

But students cannot substitute for the power of



POLICE OUTSIDE the Tory HQ during the 2010 fees revolt

the working class. This is not because students are less radical, energetic or committed—it’s because they don’t have the same power to disrupt the profit system.

Think of this year’s general strikes in Italy where workers were able to use their unique position in capitalist society to stop the flow of arms.

There have been further big changes in high education in recent decades.

In Britain, the number of young people going to university increased to 20 percent in the 1990s and 50 percent in the 2020s.

But, alongside the growth of student numbers, universities have been hammered under neoliberalism.

It sought to make them run like businesses competing for students and funding. And governments have brought in fees and loans instead of grants, saddling students with eye-watering debts.

Education is increasingly seen as a commodity, financed by private consumers.

The proportion of full-time students who are forced to work alongside studying

“In 2010, students smashed up the Tory party HQ over the fees hike

has reached a record high of almost 70 percent. That’s an increase from 56 percent in 2024 and 42 percent in 2020, driven by the cost of living.

But students as a whole aren’t a subsection of the working class—they are in transition between classes.

Variety

Universities still throw together people from a variety of class backgrounds. Only around 6.5 percent of pupils go private school. But around 30 percent of students at universities such as Oxford, Cambridge and UCL did.

The day to day experience of students isn’t the same as workers suffering exploitation at the hands of a boss.

But many students are revolted by their experiences. Universities rarely foster knowledge, encourage the exploration of ideas or develop critical and creative thinking.

But they are often freer from the responsibilities which can hold workers back.

In 2010, students smashed up the Tory party headquarters. Their militancy was a shot in the arm for the whole movement, with mass strikes in 2011.

During Covid, students at several universities organised rent strikes against university managements fleeing them.

More recently, the Palestine encampments marked a new, militant phase in the struggle against Israel’s genocide.

Student struggles can act as a spark for workers’ struggles that can hit the profit system.

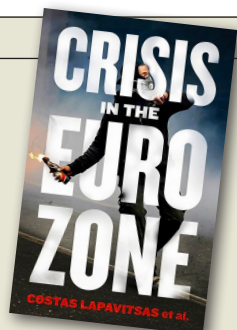
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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

MORE THAN OPIUM



MARXISM AND RELIGION

BOURNEMOUTH

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
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YMCA 56, Westover Rd,
Bournemouth
BH1 2BS

BRISTOL

Tue 9 Dec, 7pm
Arc Events, 27 Broad St,
Bristol
BS1 2HG

EDINBURGH

Wed 10 Dec, 6.45pm
Southside Community Centre
117 Nicolson St, Newington,
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER

LONDON - SOUTH

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
875-0394-3576 Pass: 283755 Vida
Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Rd,
London
SW2 1EP

ABERDEEN

After Mamdani wins
New York—A radical
history of socialism in
the belly of the beast

Thu 11 Dec, 6pm
Aberdeen Trade Union
Council, 22A Adelphi,
AB11 5BL

BIRMINGHAM

World in crisis—
Imperialism, Marxism
and resistance

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
281-634-5938
Warehouse Cafe, 54 Allison
St, Birmingham B5 5TH

BRADFORD

Can nuclear power stop
the climate crisis?

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
885-9187-7552
Cafe Liza, Ground Floor,
Grove Business Centre, Great
Horton Road, BD7 1AH

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Rock against racism—
Fighting fascism
with culture

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
589-4176-7501
Friends Meeting House, Ship
St, Brighton, BN1 1AF

CAMBRIDGE

A Marxist history of
conspiracy theories

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
681-800-4408
Mill Road Community Centre,
6 Hazell St, CB1 2GN

CARDIFF

A rebel's guide to Lenin

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
512-655-3689
Cardiff Meeting House,
43 Charles St, Cardiff,
CF10 2GB

CHESTERFIELD

Books all socialists
need to read

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
828-532-8731
The Hub, Low Pavement,
S40 1PF

COVENTRY

Sudan—Revolution,
counter-revolution and
international solidarity

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
823-945-1917
Friends Meeting House, Hill
Street, Coventry CV1 4AN

DERBY & NOTTINGHAM

Ten years that shook
the world—Art,
culture and society in
revolutionary Russia

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
354-874-4790 West
End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd, Derby,
DE22 3BL

DEVON & EXETER

Sudan—Revolution,
counter-revolution and
international solidarity

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
865-2972-2883 Exeter
Community Centre, 17 St
Davids Hill, EX3 4RG

DORSET

Is human nature a
barrier to socialism?

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
863-7941-3641
Colliton Club, Dorchester
DT1 1XZ

DUNDEE

The two souls of socialism—
What do we mean by
socialism from below?

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
894-2628-7708
Dundee Volunteer and
Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
Dundee, DD1 1LL

GLASGOW NORTH

Style as resistance—How
capitalism sells rebellion

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
Maryhill Central Halls,
292-316 Maryhill Rd,
Glasgow, G20 7YE

GLASGOW SOUTH

A Marxist guide to fighting
oppression—Smashing
the sexist system

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
Roma Cultural Centre,
43 Nithsdale St,
Glasgow, G41 2PZ

HARLOW

From Cable Street to the
Anti Nazi League—A radical
history of anti-fascism

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
832-8746-7480
The Mountstevens Room, Moot
House, Harlow, CM20 3HB

HASTINGS

Pride—Film screening

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
The White Rock Hotel, 1-10
White Rock, Hastings,
TN34 1JU

HUDDERSFIELD

Trump, the Epstein files and
the splits in MAGA

Wed 10 Dec, 6.30pm
428-926-9492
Pass 142857
The Mission, Lord
St, Huddersfield,
HD1 1QA

KENT

Are we all f*cked?
Disaster capitalism
and climate change

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
434-623-8064
Sunlight Centre, Richmond
Road Gillingham
ME7 1LX

LEEDS

World in crisis—
Imperialism, Marxism
and resistance

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
The Swarthmore
Education Centre, 2-7
Woodhouse Sq, Leeds,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

State and revolution—
Why Lenin matters today

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
493-925-5919
Arts Bar, 22 Hope St,
L1 9BY

LONDON - HACKNEY

Imperialism and the Middle
East—A horrible history
of the Labour Party

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
Halkevi Centre, 31
Dalston Ln, London,
E8 3DF

LONDON - HARINGEY

Class and the far right

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
459-388-1576
St John Vianney Church,
386 West Green Rd,
N15 3QL

LONDON - NEWHAM

Zohran Mamdani and the
Democrats—Can there
be a new left in the US?

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
597-631-7124
Ithaca House, 27
Romford Rd E15 4LJ

LONDON - TOWER HAMLETS

From Cable Street to the
Anti Nazi League—A radical
history of anti-fascism

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
896-1690-8769
The Cabin, St Margaret's
House, 21 Old Ford Rd,
London E2 9PL

LONDON - WALTHAM FOREST

From coal miners to
Deliveroo drivers—Has the
working class lost its power?

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
543-023-057
William Morris Centre, 6-8
Greenleaf Rd, E17 6QQ

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

LONDON - WEST AND NW

A rebel's guide to
George Orwell

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
8338-542-9842
Bay 20 Community Centre,
71 St Marks Rd, W10 6JG

MANCHESTER

Sexism and the system—
How do we end violence
against women?

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
Manchester, M2 5NS

NORWICH & EAST ANGLIA

From coal miners to
Deliveroo drivers—Has the
working class lost its power?

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

OXFORD

End of year fundraiser,
social and quiz

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
861-2001-6477
Michael Young Building,
Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

PLYMOUTH

Generation revolt—Can
Gen Z change the world?

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
897-1685-8334
Quaker Meeting House,
Hyde Park House, 74 Mutley
Plain, Plymouth, PL4 6LF

PORTSMOUTH

Zohran Mamdani and the
Democrats—Can there
be a new left in the US?

Wed 10 Dec, 7.30pm
488-934-2809
Somerstown Community
Centre, River St,
Southsea, PO5 4PJ

SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Sexism and the system—
How do we end violence
against women?

Thu 11 Dec, 7pm
St Mary's Church,
Bramall Ln,
Sheffield, S2 4QZ

SWANSEA

Marxism and identity politics

Thu 11 Dec, 7.30pm
902-964-963
The Environment Centre,
Pier St, Swansea SA1 1RY

YORK, SCARBOROUGH & HULL

Your Party—How can
we turn it around?

Wed 10 Dec, 7pm
8274-897-492
Clements Hall, Nunthorpe
Rd, York, YO23 1BW

CONTACT THE SWP

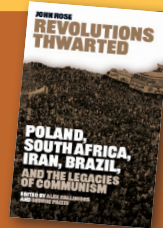
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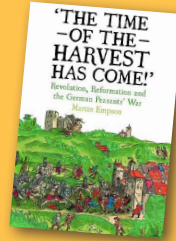
A People's History of the Anti Nazi League

By Geoff Brown
£12



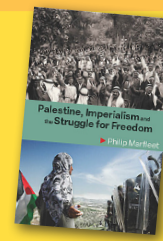
Revolutions Thwarted and the Legacies of Communism

by John Rose. £12



The Time of the Harvest has Come

by Martin Empson,
£12



Palestine, Imperialism, and the Struggle for Freedom

by Philip Marfleet. £10

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Glasgow's cultural space should belong to the city

by EMMA EDWARDS

A GRASSROOTS campaign in Glasgow is fighting to defend The Arches, one of the city's best cultural spaces.

Developers want to convert the space—which is a bar, theatre, live music venue and nightclub—into yet another corporate leisure complex and a bowling alley.

The venue, now called Platform, is the centre of a fast growing public backlash at greedy regeneration schemes and the loss of vital cultural spaces.

The threat to The Arches is not a dispute over a single building.

It reflects how capitalism reshapes the urban landscape by eliminating areas which don't fit its model of a sanitised city.

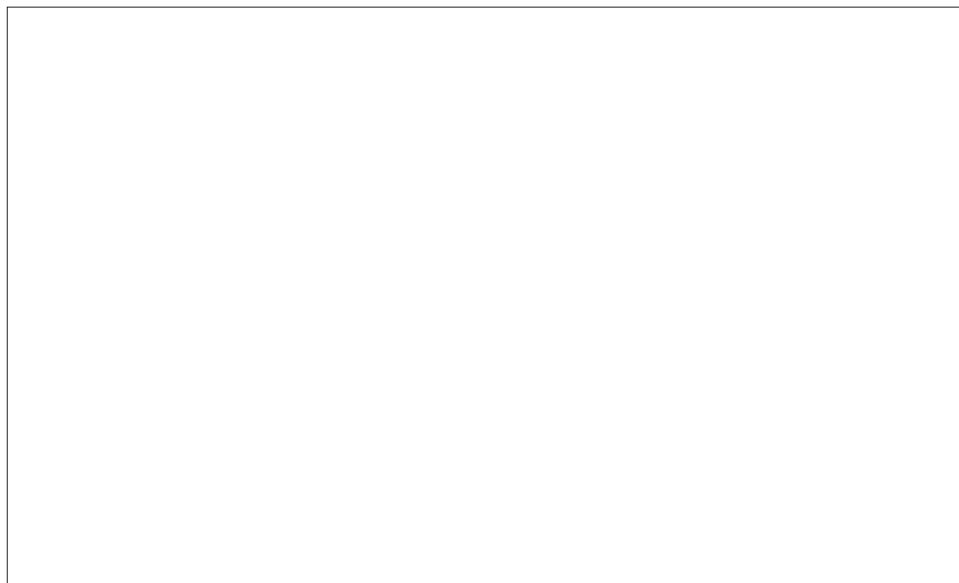
After artists and venue spoke out, people came together to launch the Arches Not Bowling campaign.

Organisers say the public response has been “overwhelmingly supportive” and it “continues to grow every day.”

Before its closure in 2015, the Arches represented a rare pocket of working class cultural autonomy.

“It was never just a venue. The Arches was a full creative ecosystem that shaped careers and supported homegrown Scottish talent,” says the campaign.

The re-opening of the Arches as Platform in 2022



THE ARCHES venue in Glasgow. Developers want to turn it into a bowling alley

was a chance to restore that tradition.

The venue quickly drew internationally recognised artists and local musicians.

Campaigners right say this demonstrates the capacity of a mixed-use cultural space to serve the public, while resisting the developers’



‘Regeneration’ often displaces working class life

profit-driven agenda. The campaign’s broad support shows that many people recognise the underlying dynamic.

“There is a shared understanding of what this space meant to Glasgow and the wider music and arts community,” say campaigners.

The anxiety at the possible loss of The Arches fits with a long-running pattern in Glasgow’s redevelopment strategy.

Council planning decisions have repeatedly favoured developers, while eroding independent culture.

What is marketed as regeneration is often a form of enclosure. Working class life is displaced to free up space for higher value commercial

activity. Campaigners argue that cultural spaces should remain under collective control.

“These spaces belong to the creative community, to the audiences who shaped them and to future generations who deserve access to culture, not just corporate entertainment,” they say.

Planning processes are moving quickly, so the campaign is urging Glasgow City Council and the government to treat cultural impact as central, not secondary.

If Glasgow wants to preserve its identity as a city shaped by working class creativity, it must defend spaces like The Arches from the logic of commercial redevelopment.

COMMENT

SHIRLEY FRANKLIN

The real story behind Watson's double helix

JAMES WATSON, who played a key role in the discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule, died at the age of 97 last month. While celebrated for this brilliant discovery, he died disgraced. He will be remembered as a sexist, a racist and a cheat.

The story of the discovery of the double helix is well-known, but shrouded in misconceptions.

Cambridge-based biochemists, Watson and Francis Crick, took the glory of the discovery for themselves, when their work drew heavily on that of other scientists.

How Crick and Watson arrived at the way atoms fit together in DNA is at the heart of the story. They found the ingredients, but had no idea how they were formed in the molecule.

My aunt, Rosalind Franklin, was working on DNA at Kings’ College London with her doctoral student, Raymond Gosling. In the next lab, another scientist, Maurice Wilkins, was also working on DNA.

Wilkins was really quite perturbed that Rosalind was not working under his leadership. Meanwhile, Rosalind thought she had been employed specifically to lead a team.

Her situation was not helped by the university’s sexist practices, which did not allow women staff into the common room, where such confusions could be addressed.

Rosalind had exceptional skills for molecular experimentation because she used a crystallography technique in X-raying molecules.

It is not clear who took the now famous Photo 51, which shows the pattern of DNA molecules. In the competitive world of science, it matters whose picture it was.

And if you are a woman scientist you are still less likely to get the recognition for discoveries than men.

It is also not totally clear how Crick and Watson got hold of the photo that would inform their work.

They had heard about Wilkins’ work and visited him, where they were shown a copy of the picture. I heard Wilkins say in a lecture that “we all make mistakes” in response to being asked who showed the photo to them.

Acknowledge

When they saw the picture, Crick and Watson realised they were on the wrong path regarding the structure of DNA. But they did not acknowledge Rosalind’s contribution.

There was a race to discover how DNA is formed. Within a matter of weeks after seeing what is considered to be Rosalind’s photo, Crick and Watson had worked out the double helical structure.

Meanwhile, Rosalind was cross-referencing with a time-consuming mathematical calculation. She arrived at the same conclusion as them a little later.

Watson wrote the story in his book *The Double Helix*. His description of Rosalind was patronising, calling her “Rosy” and focussing on her “blue-stockings” appearance.

Rosalind had died by the time the book was published. So my grandmother, appalled at the lack of acknowledgement of her daughter’s contribution, complained to the publishers and an amended second edition appeared.

Rosalind did not stay long at Kings and went on to work on the molecular formation of viruses at Birkbeck University. Her scientific contribution is said to be immense, not just because of Photo 51, but because of the technique behind the discovery of the double helix.

This method formed the basis of the work to develop the Covid vaccine.

Her commitment to socialism is omitted in the now endless accounts of her and her work.

Watson went on to contribute to the world of science, leading the Human Genome Project, mapping and sequencing the whole of the human genome.

But he claimed that black people are less intelligent than white people and that racism could be genetically justified. He continued to describe Rosalind—a brilliant scientist with a strong sense of humour—as a “difficult” woman.

Accolades and honorary titles that had been awarded to him have been removed.

MUSIC

Pushing boundaries in an ecstatic new album

LUX, THE fourth studio album by Rosalia, reflects the massive impact that women have played in musical expression throughout history.

She brings together traditional flamenco rhythms and heavy baselines with baroque and Catholic references.

These link the ecstasy and grief felt by female saints and mystics throughout history, with the experiences of a woman constantly exposed to an audience.

The album explores heartbreak, modern dating culture, sex

and memory.

It does this through operatic songs that reflect Rosalia’s classical musical training, blending it with electronic effects and distortion.

It opens with *Sexo, Violencia y Llantas* which acts as a prologue for the rest of the album.

She questions how one can both love the physical world and experience it fully while also living a divine and godly life.

Rosalia contrasts the carnal and material felt in daily life with divine peace, glimmering light,



doves and saints.

The album is not only a musical exploration, but a linguistic one.

There are 13 different languages on the album, some of which can only be heard in exclusive songs in the vinyl release.

For example, the song *Focu 'ranni* has lyrics in

Sicilian, a language that has historically been under attack.

In *Porcelana*, the chorus is in Latin, employing a language associated with religious texts. It does this to present an existential conflict that reinforces the premise of the album—“I am nothing, I am the light of the world.”

In this song, the subject is in crisis, seeking experiences that bring intense feelings of pleasure or pain, but that inevitably leave her numb.

In *La Yugular*, Rosalia sings in Arabic

referencing *Rabia Al Adawiyya*, a female poet celebrated in Sufi Islam.

LUX pushes the boundaries of what pop music can sound like. It shows that the legacy of music does not have to be contained to stuffy auditoriums and overpriced concerts.

It is a celebration of female musicians and renounces the use of AI tools in its production.

Overall, it is a must hear that combines catchy baselines and choruses with an intense emotional listening experience.

Eva Colwell

IN BRIEF

Workers lay down their arms

THOUSANDS OF workers at arms manufacturer Leonardo have won a pay rise.

After calling strikes off, workers rejected the initial deal and walked out again in November. It was the right call, as the Unite union members have now won an improved deal of 8 percent over two years.

The size of the strike at five Leonardo sites was an opportunity for the left to raise the prospect of a just transition—away from arms and towards socially useful production.

Long-running strike wins recognition

AFTER FIVE months of strikes, the MyCSP workers have won their key demand.

Some 150 civil service pension workers and PCS union members, who administer the pensions for over 1.7 million civil servants, have won union recognition.

The agreement to recognise the union came after a takeover by outsourcing firm Capita, which began on 1 December.

DWP workers fighting job cuts

PCS UNION members in Lincoln's Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) began a five-week strike on Monday in response to the announced closure of the office.

Workers are trying to save 93 jobs that are under threat of redundancy.

A good Vue of strikes ahead

WORKERS AT a Vue cinema in the St Enoch's centre in Glasgow are set for a month-long strike.

The Unite union members are raging over pay and conditions. Workers are demanding the living wage for all workers aged 18 and over, trade union recognition and subsidised transport for workers at the end of shifts.

Strikes are set for 11 December to 7 January.

Driving up pay in Scotland

STRIKES AT GXO Logistics in Motherwell, Scotland, have secured a pay win. Unite union members walked out in November to force bosses to up the deal. The two-year deal they have accepted is worth 9 percent. It brings pay in line with other drivers at GXO.

Engineers set to bish-bash Bosch

NEARLY 300 Unite union members at Bosch Rexroth in Glenrothes, Fife, are set to strike for a week starting Monday next week. Bosch bosses are pushing contract changes that would see some lose up to £1,000 a month.

HOSPITALITY

Workers at Glasgow hotel strike again

by ARTHUR TOWNEND

"WORKING FOR Village Hotel feels like they are trying to wring you out as much as they can and fling you back in the dirty bucket."

"We just want respect and equal pay among all my co-workers. There's no reason why younger workers should be paid less than me."

That's one striker at the Village Hotel in Glasgow.

The Unite union members began a five-week strike last Friday, following three weeks of strikes in the summer.

They are fighting for a real living wage for all workers, subsidised travel for early and late shifts and union recognition.

Workers won some concessions in the summer—but bosses held out, so workers voted for more strikes.

"We know that they made billions last year. No matter where the money is going, it's not going to us", another striker told Socialist Worker.



HOTEL WORKERS have begun a five-week strike

"They have the money for new locations, for all the refurbishments, and yet they don't have 40p to give to workers?"

The Village Hotel is owned by Blackstone, the world's biggest private equity firm—and one of the largest donors to the Israeli military.

Money for the genocide but not for the workers—that's what Blackstone is guilty of definitely", she said. "They only half-fund transport to work. So if I'm starting at 6am, I have to spend half my wage on actually getting to work. If it's early it's not safe to walk."

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Coal museum strikers not losing steam

UNISON UNION members at the National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, have been on all-out strike for 16 weeks in a dispute over pay.

Among them are former miners who walked out during the 1984-5 strike.

For these workers, this isn't just a job. It's about keeping the memory of the mines, and the role they've played in workers' history, alive.

Dave told Socialist Worker, "Of course the dispute is about

money, but it's also about the future of the museum. When we retired, we started working at the museum to pass the history on.

"We take tours down and talk about mining from the Victorians up to the closures in the 1980s." Glen, another striker, added that it was clear management didn't value them.

"They want us all to be volunteers. But we are skilled miners, not just tour guides. We're fitters and electricians, and we keep the mine safe for

people to visit. That's not a minimum wage job."

Dave explained that the director of the museum had shown contempt for the workers. "One time, she was driving into work, and a steward on the picket asked, 'when are you going to negotiate with the union'. She rolled her window down and shouted "never".

■Unison has called a national demonstration on Saturday assembling outside Wakefield Cathedral at 12.30pm.

HEALTH

NHS workers on strike for the right pay for the job

THEATRE assistants in Leeds have voted to strike in a dispute over pay banding and back pay.

Up to 100 Unison union members, who work at four sites run by Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, are furious about being paid at the wrong rate.

Workers regularly perform clinical duties should have been paid at band 3 rates. But bosses put them on band 2, the lowest rung of the pay ladder. Now the Trust is refusing to make a good offer on back pay.

Unison has already won many similar battles all over England and Wales with the best deals including five years of back pay. This often amounts to a payout of thousands of pounds for the most experienced workers.

Strike dates are set to be announced shortly.

■WORKERS AT a west of England mental health charity have voted to strike in a dispute over pay.

Second Step delivers council and NHS-funded mental health services across Bristol, Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire.

More than 100 Unison members, including support

workers, recovery specialists, accommodation workers and central staff, have voted to strike.

Unison regional secretary Kerry Baigent said, "These workers would prefer to focus on supporting their clients. Instead, many are struggling to support themselves."

■DISTRICT NURSES in Glasgow have won their long-running dispute over pay and grading after threatening to strike.

The nurses were on band 6 of the NHS Agenda for Change payscale. Bosses have now moved them to band 7, with backpay dated to May 2022. The Unison union members are now voting on the offer.

■INTENSIVE CARE nurses at Bassetlaw Hospital in Nottinghamshire struck last week over bosses' plans to make them work at different sites which are some 20 miles apart.

The Unite union says bosses are using hated "fire and rehire" tactics in an effort to force the workers to give in. And it says it believes the plans are a step closer to permanently closing Bassetlaw's intensive care unit "by stealth".

Mastering the art of striking

OVER 150 PCS union members at four Tate Galleries in London, Liverpool and St Ives in Cornwall were on strike over pay from Wednesday last week to Tuesday this week.

Years of restructuring at the gallery have seen hundreds of jobs cut. And workers have been offered a below-inflation pay rise.

Nicolas, on a 75-strong picket line at Tate Modern told Socialist Worker,

"We're getting a real terms pay cut for the second year in a row. The directors get £28,000 bonuses—that's more than what I make in a whole year."

He added, "For me, the main reason to come out was the morale. The way the Tate is run is more like a supermarket than a cultural institution."

PCS rep Carl said, "If Tate wants to lead the art world, they need to support their workers."

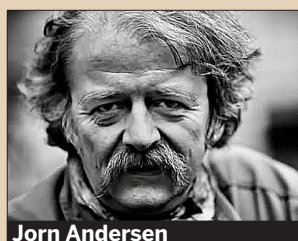
OBITUARY

Jørn Andersen 1956-2025

WE HAVE lost a good friend and comrade far too soon. Jørn had not been active in revolutionary politics for a few years up to his death, but before that he had been a key member of the International Socialists (IS) in Denmark.

Jørn joined the Left Socialists (VS), like many young non-Stalinist socialists, in the late 1970s. In 1984, he was on the wing that left and formed the IS.

Jørn's efforts in building



Jørn Andersen

the movement against the Iraq war in 2003 were probably the highlight of his political life.

He sat on the nationwide steering committee that built the largest anti-war demonstration in Denmark since the Vietnam

demonstrations in the early 1970s.

He also played a central role in organising activities around the climate summit, Cop15, in Copenhagen in 2009. A massive demonstration gathered 100,000 participants.

But he was not just a good trade union activist, a movement and party builder. He was also an excellent Marxist theorist and disseminator of theory.

We in Denmark, and in the International Socialist Tendency, have a lot to thank Jørn for. **Charlie Lywood**

OBITUARY

Greg Douglas 1939-2025

WE HAVE also lost one of the leaders of the shop stewards movement of the 1970s and lifelong socialist and trade union activist.

Greg was a fighter—a champion boxer at one stage—born in Glasgow. In 1972, he was the chair of the Joint Sites Committee on the Anchor steelworks construction site.

Workers there voted to strike to call for more money for pensioners.

They organised a mass

rally. The atmosphere was electric.

It seemed the most natural thing in the world that they should strike on behalf of workers poorer than themselves, such was the confidence workers had at the time.

He loathed racists and fascists. I only had to phone him about a suspected appearance of the National Front and he would be there.

And he was a lover of poetry, particularly Rabbin Burns, who he loved to recite by heart.

Sheila McGregor

BIRMINGHAM

Agency workers join the Brum bin strikes

by ARTHUR TOWNEND

AFTER NINE months of the Birmingham bin workers' indefinite strike, there was a sense of regained momentum outside the Sherlock Street depot on Monday.

Job&Talent agency workers, who had previously been used as scab labour, joined the picket lines for the first time.

Around 200 Unite union members and their supporters rallied outside the city centre site in the morning.

"Morale is really picking up because of it," striker Sam told Socialist Worker. The agency workers, who have joined Unite, voted by 100 percent to back the strike after management's bullying, harassment and blacklisting.

"It was about 20 agency workers when they balloted. But all in all, about 30 agency workers have walked out," Sam explained.

Pressure

"We're working to get the drivers out to join us—that's the key. The more drivers come out, the more trucks that stay put—and trucks staying put is crucial to putting pressure on the council."

Striker David said that the picket lines have been "going strong". "The agency workers coming out is a boost, I think



SOME 200 Unite union members rallied outside the city centre site

PHOTO: GUY SMALLMAN

we're standing firm," he said.

Zarah Sultana, the left wing Your Party MP, joined the picket line. "When trade unions are on the front line, it is the responsibility of socialist MPs to show solidarity," she told Socialist Worker.

Sultana slammed Labour's attacks as "completely unacceptable—especially when it comes from a Labour council under a Labour government that is watering down workplace rights".

"We have not ended the era of austerity," she said. "Labour is carrying on with cuts and those always get passed down through local government. The bin workers are on the

front lines of those cuts. Local councils are happy to pay loads of money to senior management. But when it comes to paying the workers who keep this city clean, keep this city running, they are told there's no money for that.

"We don't accept that framing—show solidarity with workers struggling wherever they are."

Ayoub Khan, the Your Party MP, who previously suggested the military break the strike, wasn't on the picket line.

Unite rep and striker Danny told the rally, "We need a genuine working class party, because the Labour government has failed us.

They've stood by as workers like us have been forced onto picket lines and they've done nothing to help. But united, organised and determined we will win."

The strike's momentum has been under threat after the council used the courts to ban disruptive picket lines.

But agency workers joining the action means workers could regain the upper hand.

Unite leaders must try to win as many agency workers as possible to the strike. The main task is to build mass picket lines to keep the depots shut.

■ Some workers' names have been changed

SCHOOLS

'We cannot endure any more cuts to education'

THE NEU education union will launch an indicative ballot in February asking members if they are willing to strike to defend education against austerity.

The government is proposing a 6.5 percent pay award for teachers over three years, with no extra funding. Schools will be forced to fund the pay award through their own budgets—meaning cuts.

"Cold classrooms, leaking roofs, broken toilets. Staff

leaving and never replaced. Workload soaring as a result. We cannot endure any more cuts to education," Daniel Kebede, NEU union general secretary said.

"Education is running on empty. We will not stand by as this government continues to underfund our schools and drive education into the ground. As a union we are prepared to take whatever action is necessary to save our schools."

East London school battle

NEU UNION members struck this week at Belmont Park School in Waltham Forest, east London, over failures of management.

Education workers were out on Monday and Tuesday and were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "We have had a new headteacher since January, so for almost a year, and all staff are upset about the attitude, ethos and direction of the school."

There is an excessive workload, financial problems caused by management, opportunities for some and not for others and a lack of meaningful consultation.

"The way the headteacher speaks to staff isn't professional at all. There has been victimisation and constant rule changes," a striker said. "There is no meeting half way. It always has to be her way. There is no communication. She belittles us and makes you feel incompetent."

And there have been

mistakes made around pay and pensions. No worker should enter a workplace not knowing whether their pension contributions have been paid correctly.

"Some pensions haven't been paid since May. A new payroll has been introduced that messed up people's money. It meant that some people missed out on Universal Credit," a worker added.

And bosses have implemented a curriculum that creates workload issues and isn't suited to the children at the school.

The school teaches children with special educational needs and disabilities (Send).

But the headteacher is implementing "a mainstream curriculum for a special needs school," a striker said. "We have to adapt to the kids. She has copied and pasted the curriculum from her last school", they added.

More days of action are planned, with workers walking out from Monday to Thursday next week.

BUSES

Bus strikes win in Wales

FIRST CYMRU bus drivers in South Wales have won a pay increase. The Unite union members' solid strikes and the threat of a continuous two-month strike sealed the deal.

Big, confident pickets with little scabbing have been a shock to the company, which has lost thousands of pounds.

Poverty wages of just £13.45 an hour have been replaced by £14.07 an hour, with backpay from 31 March of this year. In addition, £14.25 an hour will be paid from the end of November, eventually progressing to £15 an hour from January 2027.

First Cymru unfortunately got away with imposing a pay rate of 30p an hour less on new starters employed for under 12 months. This maintains a two-tier workforce.

There are also future issues that need a fight, such as an hour long lunch break. There is also a possible attack on

the convoy system, where car-less bus drivers get a company-organised lift to work. The successful pay fight could give a boost to these fights too.

As Chris, a bus striker explained to Socialist Worker, "I think it was a win despite the difficulties we experienced. I'm glad we fought for it and experienced solidarity."

"I think we can be proud of this win in spite of their divisive tactics."

■ BUS DRIVERS in east London have voted to strike. The Unite union members believe there has been victimisation of union reps, with two facing suspension. One has now been reinstated, but one remains suspended.

Workers rightly argue this is a threat to the right of all workers to organise. Strikes are set for 12-13 December and 8-9 January.

TRANSPORT

A return to the pickets

TRANSPORT FOR Greater Manchester workers struck again last week.

The Unison and Unite union members walked out on Tuesday for four days in a dispute over pay.

Striker James told Socialist Worker, "We put forward our pay offer in April this year and the ignorant executive—including mayor Andy Burnham—didn't bother to look at it until September this year."

"They came back with a percentage increase of 3.2 percent—but as you know that is well below inflation. How do they expect us to keep this city running on a pay deal where we can't put food on our table?"

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

UCU members are fighting back

UCU UNION members in further education voted overwhelmingly for strikes in a ballot earlier this month.

Workers at the Capital City College Group are set to strike on 10 and 11 December with a rally on 10 December.

The UCU branch at the huge college group will call on its 500 members across 13 different sites in London to join the action. The dispute is over pay, workloads and national bargaining.

College workers in other parts of the country will strike on 14, 15 and 16 January.

The union ran separate strike ballots in each college or employer. It achieved an overall vote of 90 percent in favour and met the ballot turnout threshold overall.

However, when looking at the individual ballots, only 33 colleges out of 54 met that crucial turnout requirement. UCU members from the



University of Derby strikers

UCU Left grouping within the union tried to argue in a further education committee meeting for escalating action that starts before Christmas. They said that branches that narrowly missed the turnout should have another vote.

The UCU Left said, "This is not the hard-hitting campaign we had hoped for. Nevertheless we need to ensure that it is still as big and as successful as it can be."

■ WORKERS AT the University of Derby struck from Tuesday to Thursday this week over job cuts and course closures.

UCU branch committee member Charlotte Clewlow told Socialist Worker, "There are 265 staff members they are looking to get rid of. There is no-one who doesn't know someone who is at risk."

"In meetings with management we have been told to buckle up and get on with it. As if these aren't people's lives. The whole thing has been demoralising."

But she said the picket lines had lifted spirits. "Students have brought their own placards. It's given a sense that everyone is together in this. It does give people a bit of strength. We are not a traditionally militant branch but this has really riled people up."

At the University of Sheffield, they're out this week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and Tuesday to Friday next week.

ISRAEL NOW LAYING SIEGE TO WEST BANK

by ARTHUR TOWNEND

ISRAEL SUBJECTED a city in the northern West Bank to an onslaught on Monday.

The Israeli army carried out assaults across Tubas, near Jenin, imposing a curfew and raiding homes before converting them into military barracks.

The move comes just over 24 hours after the military withdrew from the city following a four-day operation.

The siege began last Wednesday when Israeli forces invaded the city.

The following day, the occupation sent in helicopters and pushed more troops into the area, forcing schools and shops to shut down.

Mahmoud, who lives in the West Bank, explained that around 200 Palestinians are being treated for injuries following Israeli attacks.

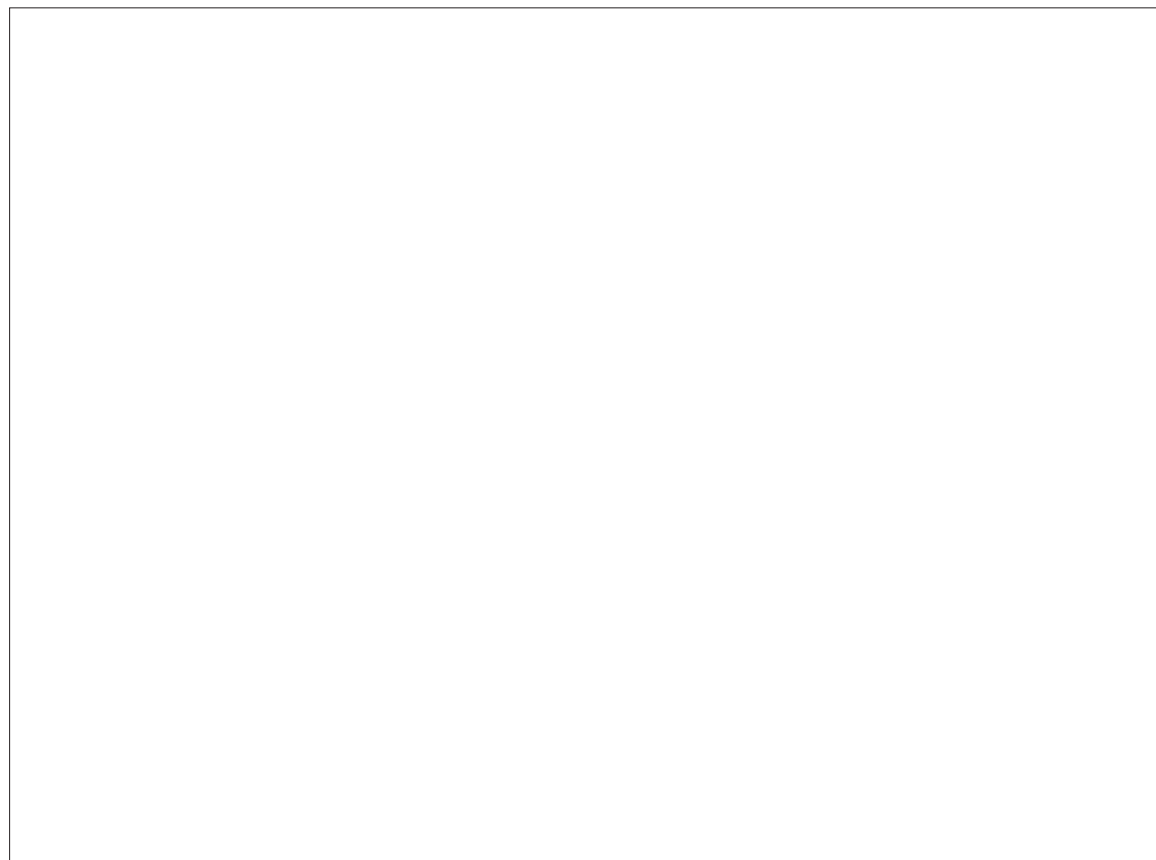
Moments

And video footage captured Israeli soldiers murdering two Palestinians moments after they surrendered.

Soldiers instructed two unarmed men to return to a building they had been holed up in—and then executed them.

Israeli forces have now arrested hundreds of Palestinians in what they claim is a “counter-terror” operation.

Prior to the invasion, they circulated leaflets saying the area has become a “haven for terrorism”. “Israeli security forces will not



ISRAELI SOLDIERS last week during an army raid in West Bank city of Tubas

accept this and will act with force and determination,” the leaflets said.

“If you do not change this, we will act as we did in Jenin and Tulkarem.”

The attack on Tubas is the latest in a growing number of interventions in the West Bank.

Some 32,000 Palestinians have been displaced from refugee camps in Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams.

“I think they actually are implementing the annexation plan,” Mahmoud told Socialist Worker.

“Israel is trying to force people to leave their land, and they use several ways.

“They use financial ways, like stealing taxes.”

The Palestinian Authority can’t keep all its taxes and that has affected education and health care—because the Israelis are confiscating them.

“They use violence, demolitions, stopping Palestinians from building, bringing their sheep and cows onto our land.”

And a committee in the Israeli parliament last week approved a draft law to allow settlers to own property in the West Bank.

Refuses

Israel’s violence in the West Bank comes as Israel refuses to give up on its genocidal ambitions in Gaza.

Last Thursday, around half of Gaza’s emergency services stopped running amid severe fuel shortages.

The outage came as Amnesty International released a new brief that says that “Israeli authorities are still committing genocide against Palestinians”.

“Limited aid to a few does not mean that the genocide has ended or that Israel’s intent has changed.”

Leaders of Middle Eastern states are now meeting to discuss progression to the second phase of the ceasefire.

With the colonial takeover of Gaza underway, Israel wants to secure the whole of Palestine. Western states have fuelled Israel’s barbarism for over two years.

And that barbarism shows no sign of stopping.

‘Ceasefire is not liberation’ say Palestine protesters

ANGER AT Israel’s violations of the ceasefire filled central London last Saturday as 100,000 people joined the 33rd Palestine national demonstration.

It came amid the West and Israel’s colonial land-grab in Gaza and the ramping up of attacks in the West Bank.

“The ceasefire isn’t enough,” Bill told Socialist Worker. “The fact that Israel is now bombing Syria and Lebanon and executing Palestinians shows it isn’t a

ceasefire—it’s a facade.”

Pippa, an NEU union rep, said that the ceasefire is “not acceptable for Palestinians”. She called on trade unions to “keep up the pressure for a proper deal that rebuilds Gaza”.

Negotiations

“The Palestinian people should be involved in the negotiations and have their voices heard,” she told Socialist Worker.

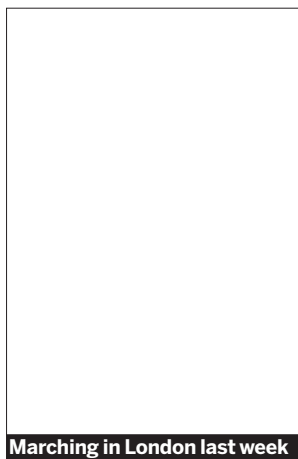
“It shouldn’t be an agreement between Binyamin Netanyahu and

Donald Trump. Palestinians should have the right to return and to equality.”

Raj and Mo joined the protest from Bradford, in west Yorkshire. “These people are living in hell—worse than hell,” Raj told Socialist Worker.

“No shelter, no life, no country to call their own because it’s decimated—nowhere to go, no hope on the horizon.”

Raj slammed the ceasefire is a “con” and “a capitulation process”. “The United Nations has caved



Marching in London last week

to the pressure to accept this con job to calm things down,” he said.

“But Israel won’t be calmed down. A rogue state powered by forces to act with impunity in the region—Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran.

“How can it have the right to exist, when it occupies others’ homes and countries, runs apartheid and commits genocide?

“It can be allowed to exist only because it’s called Israel. And here we enable it, we give it arms

and legitimacy.” Mo added that “accountability is essential”. “Enforce the ICJ court’s arrest warrants—it’s not easy, but it has to happen,” he told Socialist Worker.

Mo said that the “movement must continue to pressure and stop the supply of arms”. “That’s still ongoing, and the genocide is nearing its final phase,” he said.

“Israel started from the statement that it wanted to destroy Gaza and remove Palestinians.”