

All out for Palestine and
SATURDAY 16 MAY
against Tommy Robinson

Central London, 12 noon

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**REFORM UK CANDIDATES ON
FASCIST BNP MEMBERS LIST**

**NASTY
NIGEL'S
NAZI
MATES**

**BACK CAMPAIGN
AGAINST FAR RIGHT**

>>Pages 2&3



(top) David Prior standing in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (middle) George Parnell, standing in two seats in Fleet, Hampshire (bottom) BNP members on the march



The Mandelson scandal continues

WHAT WE THINK

Sleazy Starmer still on the ropes

KEIR STARMER was staring down the barrel of an investigation into his appointment of Peter Mandelson as US ambassador, as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday afternoon.

MPs were set to vote on whether the prime minister would face the MPs privileges committee.

Labour MPs have been whipped into backing Starmer, with him whimpering, "When we stick together and fight together we are so much stronger."

Pressured

This comes after a top Foreign Office official on Monday said that he "felt pressured to deliver a rapid outcome" on Mandelson's appointment despite vetting concerns.

On Tuesday afternoon Morgan McSweeney, Starmer's former chief of staff and spin doctor, was set to testify.

McSweeney was sacked by Starmer in February, a "casualty" in Mandelson's scandal and a futile attempt from the prime minister to save his own skin.

But "Petie's" paedophile mates and links to China are now the least of Starmer's concerns.

Labour is set to face historic defeat in the elections set for 7 May. Since

>>Continued on page 5



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'An entire nation is being humiliated by the Iranian leadership'

German chancellor **Frederich Merz** mourns the humiliation of Donald Trump and US imperialism

'We are standing here together for the sake of our children. The state of Israel must change direction'

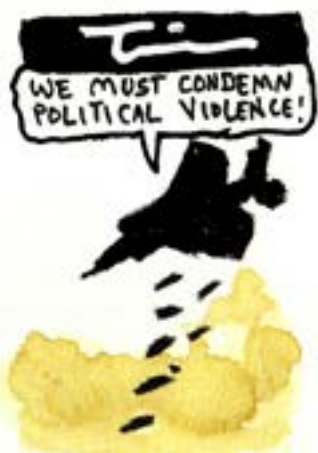
Israeli 'opposition' leader **Yair Lapid** forms a new coalition called Together to take on Binyamin Netanyahu

'The State of Israel will not apologise. We know how to protect ourselves'

Lapid during the 'good old days' justifying the Israeli murder of Palestinian children in Gaza when he was interim prime minister, in 2022

'The building momentum in the country must not be stopped, even for a second'

Lapid's coalition partner **Naftalie Bennett** on Israeli settlement building in the West Bank



Why did the Spanish state give migrants more rights?

by CAMILLA ROYLE

THERE WERE scenes of celebration in the Spanish state this month when hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants were given more rights and stability.

A decree that allows migrants to apply for a legal residence permit was passed.

This will give them the right to work.

The actions of prime minister **Pedro Sánchez**—of the Labour-type PSOE—shows up the British Labour government's crackdown on migrants.

David Karvala, from United Against Fascism and Racism in Catalonia, told Socialist Worker, "It's good news. People are already starting to go through the procedures to get their papers."

Result

He explained that the decree was a result of a big mobilisation led by migrants that began in 2020.

"It's a thing that goes back to Covid-19," he said. "Migrant activists in Catalonia started petitioning and got around 700,000 signatures."

"If you get more than 500,000 signatures, you can get a debate in parliament

through something called the Popular Legislative Initiative. "You had to be a Spanish citizen to sign it. But that was years ago, so it's been stalled."

"It affects at least half a million people—all these people have been waiting for years."

David outlined that the Spanish state wants to regularise migrants out of economic necessity.

It has one of the world's oldest populations, so relies on migrant labour.

The bosses understand

that they benefit—as well as the migrants themselves—from giving more rights to people coming to the country. **David** said, "The main employer organisations are all in favour."

"As we know, anti-migration laws are not there to stop migrants—they are there to stop them getting more rights."

"But the employers recognise that they need more people," **David** said.

"In agriculture, they could employ people off the books, but not in every industry. And

they need them regularised so they pay income tax."

Even the Tory-type PP was previously in favour of regularising undocumented migrants.

But now it is strongly against it—so is the far right Vox party.

Image

David argued that **Sánchez** doesn't always live up to his radical image.

"Obviously it's good that the rhetoric is progressive, but the rhetoric doesn't always match the reality", he said.

In 2022, **Sánchez** congratulated police for preventing migrants from entering the Spanish state from Morocco via Spain's colonial enclave of **Malilayah**.

He called the attempted crossing a "violent assault on Spanish soil".

Police murdered at least 37 migrants. **Sánchez** later claimed that he wasn't aware of the massacre.

But he supports the EU border regime that leads to these deaths on Europe's borders.

The real story isn't that social democracy is radical.

It is that the state can be pushed by pressure from below, including from migrants themselves, into offering them more rights.

PRIME MINISTER **Pedro Sánchez**

Anti-fascists protest in Leeds and London

by PAT MEUSEL

ANTI-RACISTS WERE the clear majority in Leeds city centre last Saturday.

Around 300 turned out for a demo called by Leeds Stand Up To Racism (SUTR)—a counter-protest against Nazi **Nick Tenconi** and his Ukip party.

No more than 50 of **Tenconi's** supporters showed up on the day.

Tenconi himself was a no show for most of the day, arriving late.

When he did arrive, he and his supporters

were allowed to march. When anti-racists tried to prevent this, police arrested several of them.

Benji, a SUTR supporter, said "We can't let Nazis march on the streets of Leeds or any other cities in Britain."

"We need to be in out in the biggest numbers possible in London on 16 May to oppose **Tommy Robinson**."

■ Some 40 anti-racists faced off against 100 far right protesters outside the Home Office today. Women Against

The Far Right had called a counter protest to a rally planned by the Pink Ladies.

The Pink Ladies weaponise the issue of violence against women to whip up racism and attacks on migrants and refugees.

Intimidation

The anti-racists were met with harassment and intimidation from men on the Pink Ladies' side.

These included a number of "auditors", among them **Tony Martin** of the National Front.

Samira Ali, national organiser for Stand Up To Racism, called the Pink Ladies out for what they are.

"They're a far right outfit that does not care about women", she said.

"Otherwise, they wouldn't be supporting parties like Restore Britain, who want to repeal the already limited abortion rights that women have."

"Otherwise they wouldn't be calling their supporters out to stand with **Tommy Robinson** on 16 May."

ELECTIONS

CWU union should back postal workers over Reform UK leaflets

ROYAL MAIL bosses are hunting a plucky postal worker who told social media he'd binned Reform UK election leaflets that he was meant to deliver.

A post on the Royal Mail Chat Facebook group, read, "My DO had reform party's D2D today. I dumped them all in a bin. They can sack me! Idgaf!"

"DO" is short for delivery office, "D2D" for door-to-door advertising mail, and "Idgaf" means "I don't give a fuck".

A furious, gammon-faced Reform UK representative wrote to Royal Mail chief executive **Alistair Cochrane** demanding he take "action."

But Royal Mail staff have long refused to handle election leaflets for racist parties.

Back in 2010, postal workers across Britain refused to deliver British National Party (BNP) general election leaflets.

Refuse

Many employees even contacted their CWU union to ask if they could refuse them.

One branch activist in the Midlands told Socialist Worker at the time, "Our members in Brierley Hill, near Dudley, are determined not to touch their leaflets and I think they are absolutely right."

"Delivering that stuff in an area where there have been big battles with the far right puts postal workers in danger because some people might think that they are endorsing the BNP."

"I tell people that the union has negotiated an agreement with Royal Mail that says no one can be forced to touch BNP material if they object to it on grounds of their beliefs."

Around 100 postal workers in Bristol and Somerset also refused to deliver the fascist party's addresses, as did a number of workers in Macclesfield, Cheshire.

Many workers cited a Royal Mail "conscience clause," agreed in 2005.

It allowed postal workers not to deliver material they found offensive or believed their customers may find offensive.

Today, the CWU should uphold its proud anti-racist traditions and back any worker that refuses to deliver racism through the letterbox.

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Reform UK is safe haven for fascists and racists

by YURI PRASAD

REFORM UK has once again been exposed as a home for former members and supporters of the fascist British National Party (BNP).

Nigel Farage claimed previously his “golden rule” prevented former BNP members from even joining Reform UK.

But in yet another blow to the party’s shambolic “vetting procedures,” three Reform UK local election candidates were last week revealed to be on a database of BNP members and contacts.

The list dates back to 2008, when Nick Griffin led the party.

When the leak emerged, it was reported that the list might include lapsed members, as well as details of those who had expressed interest in joining but had not signed up.

The investigation by the Mirror newspaper revealed that one of those on the leaked list is George Parnell, from Hampshire. He is standing as a county candidate for Fleet Town, as well as for Hart District Council.

Generations

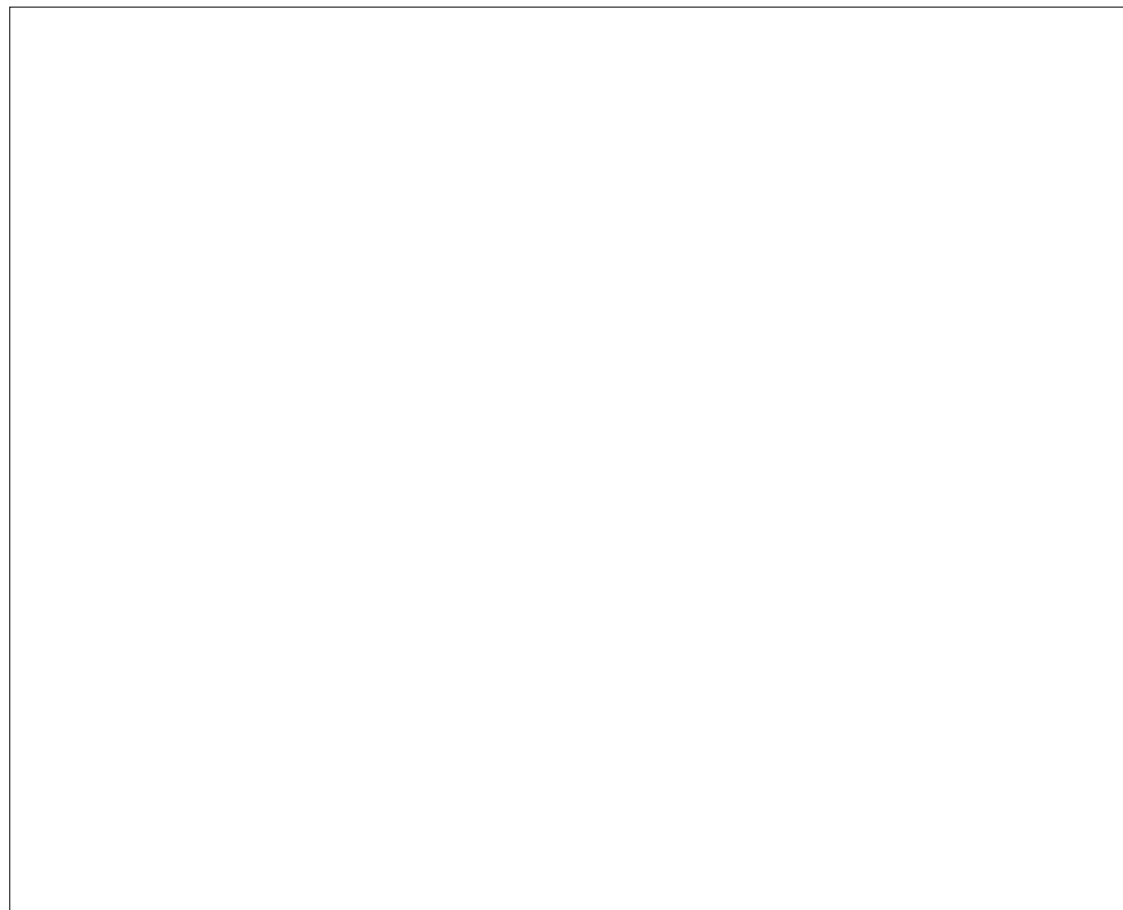
Parnell, who works in the technology sector, told voters he is “committed to protecting Fleet’s character for future generations.”

Another whose name and address appear on the BNP database is John Black. He is standing in Blackburn, Lancashire.

The wannabe councillor told the Mirror he had never been a BNP member. When asked to explain why he was named on the leaked list, he replied, “I have no idea.”

Meanwhile, David Prior, is standing in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, an area with a large Orthodox Jewish community.

Prior now says his membership



EX-BNP LEADER Nick Griffin in 2013. His party was broken by mass campaigning, not Reform UK

was a “mistake” and occurred “a lot of years ago.”

But according to a source in the Jewish News newspaper last week, Prior’s BNP membership is an “open secret” in the village where he lives. And the source questions why Reform UK’s vetting procedures have failed to uncover his background.

“If people like David Prior are slipping through the net, you have to worry seriously about Reform UK’s vetting processes,” they said.

“How many other secret far right extremists are standing for Farage’s party in the 7 May elections?”

Farage claims that his party is responsible for the demise of the BNP. But the real damage to the fascist party happened much earlier.

Ploughed

Barking, in outer east London, was the key battleground in the 2010 elections.

The BNP was the official opposition in the borough with

12 local councillors. It ploughed in thousands of pounds to win all 34 seats.

But hundreds of anti-racists campaigned in the area in the run-up to the vote, holding gigs and meetings, and giving out some 200,000 leaflets. Every single Nazi was kicked out.

Today, as Farage’s Reform UK is a home for those who once backed the BNP, is it any wonder that his party candidate list is full of Nazi has-beens?

Reform will attempt to rewrite history if it wins in Wales

REFORM UK will instruct museums on what kinds of history are acceptable, its Welsh manifesto said last week.

In a chilling reminder of the 1930s, the right wing party wants an authorised history taught and opposes discussion of colonialism and slavery as “divisive.”

In its place, the manifesto says Reform UK would “restore evidence-led history”.

It pledges that, “Publicly funded museums, heritage bodies and interpretation sites will present history

chronologically and in context, with clarity about cause and consequence.”

A spokesperson for Reform UK added, “Too often some public spaces are presenting divisive views of history that are designed to make people feel guilty.”

But Heledd Fychan, of the Plaid Cymru party, accused Reform UK of wanting to “dictate how museums operate in Wales and how they present our nation’s history.”

“This is a frightening prospect,” she said.



FARAGE’S FRAUDS

No.2 ‘We’re not racist’

NIGEL FARAGE loves to tell us that his party isn’t racist or far right.

But ask him about his public school days—when he said Adolf Hitler was right—or why one of his MPs hates ads with black people in them, and suddenly his answers are coyer.

The truth is that Reform UK’s mainstay is racism, but it wants to be able to deny that when under pressure.

That’s why its focus is on immigration.

For example, the party wants to remove between 500,000 and 600,000 people from Britain in a single term in office.

It says it will target “unauthorised” migrants, but everyone knows that the majority of those people will have black or brown skins.

Snatch

Like Ice in the US, Farage’s beefed up border force, will target anyone who MIGHT be here illegally, and detain them for processing. Raids and arbitrary arrests will therefore traumatised millions of people.

The many, white-skinned Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and Americans here who have overstayed their visas will hardly have to worry. Farage’s snatch squads won’t be after them.

The word “immigration” has become code for “non-white” and “other”—it deliberately racialises people, making them less than human and less deserving of sympathy.

In that, Reform UK shares a belief common among the main parties, that immigration is a problem to be managed.

Purge

But unlike the others, when Reform UK talks of “illegals,” it is in reality preparing the ground for a far wider purge of people of colour.

The party already says it wants to “review” all successful asylum claims granted within the past five years.

And it says citizenship could be withdrawn from those who have committed a crime.

No wonder more than half of Reform members believe non-white British citizens born abroad should be “encouraged to leave.”

Farage knows that every time he uses the words “illegal migrant,” his supporters imagine all those who aren’t white.

★Fight Farage ★Resist Starmer

Join the
SWP





Labour in crisis as movement resists state repression

by CAMILLAROYLE

CAMPAIGN GROUP Defend Our Juries protested outside the Royal Court of Justice in central London on Tuesday.

It marked the first day of the Home Office appeal against February's High Court's ruling that the ban on Palestine Action was "unlawful".

Campaigners are determined to resist the state's repression of the Palestine movement.

Ahead of the appeal, more than 1,000 people signed a statement defying the Labour government's ban on support for Palestine Action.

The seven-word letter stated simply, "We oppose genocide. We support Palestine Action".

Cultural figures and activists who added their names include climate justice campaigner Greta Thunberg, author Sally Rooney and scholar Judith Butler.

They risk potential terror charges for signing the statement.

Academics who also signed include several senior professors of law, president of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Nicola Pratt, and Eyal Weizman, founding director of Forensic Architecture.

And since the statement was launched last Friday, the numbers signing up continue to grow.

The Labour government banned Palestine Action, a non-violent direct action group, under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Appealing

The Royal Courts of Justice in February ruled the proscription unlawful. But, with the state appealing this week, cops are still arresting people for expressing their support for the group.

Recently over 500 people were hauled away for holding signs with the same seven-word message in London's Trafalgar Square.

Defend Our Juries has said, "If the police proceed to arrest these scholars on terrorism charges, the authoritarian nature of the ban will be further exposed."

"But if they don't, the more than

Greta Thunberg

3,000 previous arrests of people for saying precisely the same thing will be shown to be not just unlawful but arbitrary and discriminatory."

The state is still locking up activists for taking action against the war machine. On Friday, three members of the Teledyne Four were jailed for 20 months for criminal damage.

Damage

They were convicted in February of causing £570,000 of damage at Teledyne near Bradford, which sells components and technology to Israel used to murder Palestinians.

And in Germany, the Ulm Five face trial this week for allegedly breaking into an Elbit Systems weapons factory in the city of Ulm, Baden-Württemberg, last September.

Since their arrest they have been imprisoned under extreme conditions including being locked up for up to 23 hours a day with restricted access to books, visits and phone calls.

Germany is the second biggest supplier of arms to Israel behind the United States. Mimi Tatlow-Golden, the mother of one of the group, said the German state was seeking to make an example of them.

If the court rejects the government's appeal, Labour will sink deeper into crisis over its authoritarian repression of the Palestine movement.



HUNDREDS WERE arrested by police at the Lift the Ban protest in London this month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

RAF Fairford protest demands an end to British complicity in Iran war

WARPLANES ROARED overhead as hundreds of people marched to RAF Fairford airbase on Saturday.

The base in Gloucestershire is one of 12 US bases in Britain. It is home to the huge B52 and B1 bombers used by the US to spread murder and destruction in Iran.

A group of Iranians displayed photos of all the children killed in a school in Minab, southern Iran, on the first day of the assault. And protesters made a chain along the barbed wire fence of the base.

Marzi, an Iranian living in London, told Socialist Worker, "I'm here to oppose the war in Iran. There's a ceasefire but it's quite fragile and we don't know what will happen tomorrow. We oppose bombing in Iran and everywhere around the world."

Nigel Day from Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Nukewatch UK told Socialist Worker that Fairford is the only forward base for strategic bombers in Europe.

He said that the war on Iran had raised awareness of the US bases in Britain. "Now it's prominent," he said. "People know about it. It's where they are actively bombing."

He added that Fairford is only a



Protesters marching to RAF Fairford

cog in the imperial war machine. The anti-war movement should also target Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire, because of their role in Trident nuclear weapons, he said.

Coaches came from London, Bristol and Birmingham. But many of those joining were local activists.

Lenny from Stroud, in Gloucestershire, told Socialist Worker, "We feel very strongly. You can see the B52s flying over and we think this is just wrong."

CND general secretary Sophie Bolt told the marchers, "There is a fragile ceasefire. But Donald Trump is again threatening to commit war crimes in Iran. He is

talking about bombing bridges and power stations.

She added, "Starmer is lying to the British public when he says Britain's base at Fairford will only be used defensively. He has no say in how these bombers are deployed. It is not going to make us more safe. We have been dragged into this war and that makes us all a target."

Tom Whittaker from Bristol Stop the War called on people to join the protest in London on Nakba Day on 16 May. He said, "We will be marching in solidarity with the Palestinians, against war in Iran. And to smash Tommy Robinson, the far right and fascists who the Metropolitan police disgracefully want to hand central London to."

He said, "These causes are linked. Trump's imperialism and militarism is spreading racism, it's spreading far right politics and we need to oppose it."

Trump is again threatening to escalate the war in Iran.

The anti-war movement should target the bases and arms factories and demand an end to Britain's complicity. And it should march on Nakba Day in defiance of the cops and the far right.

Lebanese socialist speaks as Israeli assault deepens

by CAMILLA ROYLE

A CEASEFIRE between Israel and Lebanon was extended for three weeks last week. But Ghassan, a socialist based in the capital Beirut said, "It's not changed much since the ceasefire."

"Israel keeps bombing the south and the Beqaa valley," he told Socialist Worker. "There are five or six martyrs every day. Today, they hit a convoy of displaced people."

Last week an Israeli airstrike killed journalist Amal Khalil from the left wing al-Akhbar newspaper. Israel's forces demolished a house where she and a colleague were attempting to shelter. They also fired on rescue workers attempting to save the journalist's life.

Israel has established a "yellow line" in the south of Lebanon where its forces continue to operate—in the same way it has encroached on Gaza.

Israel's defence minister Israel Katz has confirmed that the yellow line extends up to six miles into Lebanon.

Within the yellow line, Israeli forces are demolishing hundreds of homes.

Ghassan said, "They are demolishing villages in the south within what they call the yellow line—it seems they want to raze them to the ground."

Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah has retaliated by using drones and rockets against Israeli troops within Lebanon.

"There is talk inside Israel about settling south Lebanon. But it seems a ground invasion has been hampered—they haven't been able to move deeper than the yellow line due to the resistance."

Ghassan explained that volunteers had been able to visit the city of Tyre, which has been targeted by Israeli bombs. He said, "It's a bit easier to



DESTRUCTION IN Lebanon after Israeli bombing

PIC: GUY SMALLMAN

deliver aid. But the villages in the south still need a lot of aid."

Donald Trump wants to work with the Lebanese state to disarm Hezbollah. The US president said last week, "We are going to be working with Lebanon to get things straightened out in that country."

"I think it will be a wonderful thing to get this worked out simultaneously with what we are doing in Iran."

Dissent

But Ghassan said, "The government is becoming less and less popular and dissent against them is growing."

A peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon was not included in the deal between the US and Iran agreed earlier this month.

It later emerged that the Lebanese state had refused to allow Iran to

negotiate on its behalf. Ghassan explained that this gave Israel a couple more days to bomb, including the massive airstrikes on 8 April that slaughtered over 300 people.

And many people in Lebanon are furious that their government meets with Israel while it commits apartheid and genocide in Palestine and attacks Lebanon.

Ghassan said, "The great majority of people—even if they don't support Hezbollah—don't agree with the normalisation of Israel."

"But there is a big increase in internal repression. The state is refusing to allow demonstrations and are threatening journalists that are close to Hezbollah."

Lebanese people are resisting attacks by Israel and the repression from their own state.

Radical alternative on offer in Hackney

DES BARROW is standing for the Cazenove Independents in Cazenove ward, Hackney.

I'm standing with a Turkish-Kurdish activist, Ceren Sagir. She's a community activist in the area, and I'm an activist with the NEU teachers' union.

As a teacher, I'm highlighting how eight schools in the borough have been closed in the last few years. And we're facing cuts to support workers in our schools.

We're appalled by the council's stance on Palestine. It refused to de-twin with Haifa, the main port of entry for arms going to Israel. And it refused to disinvest council pension funds from Israel.

Housing is also vitally important to our campaign.

House prices in Hackney have risen sevenfold since 2000. Rents are increasing and becoming



Socialists campaigning in Hackney

completely unaffordable for most people. The council's built 1,000 new homes since 2011, but there are 8,500 households on the waiting list.

The attempts to close Ridley Road Shopping Village are emblematic of what's happening across our borough. Land is being

handed over to developers to build homes for higher income young professionals rather than maintaining services for local people.

We want councillors who will fight for more money from the government rather than managing cuts. We want to fight for fully funded services and rent controls.

Reform UK's standing in every ward in Hackney, so we also want to say no to Reform's racism.

We've leafleted outside the local mosque and got a great response. We've been invited to go back and speak there again. And we're leafleting the whole ward with our third leaflet.

We're meeting people who went on the Together march on 28 March and want to get involved. Everywhere we go, we meet lots of enthusiastic people who want a radical alternative."

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

SIR ZOMBIE STARMER

>>continued from front page

it won its huge majority in July 2024, it has consistently failed working class people it had promised change to.

In less than two years it has launched austerity 2.0, backed genocide and forever wars, punished children and pensioners and copied the far right's racism.

It's unlikely that MPs will vote to boot Starmer out this week. As far as they are concerned, he has one crucial job left—Labour needs someone to take the blame for their upcoming election defeat.

As the centre collapses, it's clear we need to turn elsewhere. We must continue to fight the far right and the mainstream parties that allow it to grow.

WILL GREENS STAY RED?

THE GREEN Party have inspired hundreds of thousands of people who are fed up with Keir Starmer and fearful of Reform UK.

While Labour collapses into trying to "out-racist" Nigel Farage, it's inspiring to hear a force take on the lies about immigration.

And while mainstream politicians claim "there is no alternative" to austerity, it's refreshing to have Zack Polanski say he wants to tax the rich.

But the real tests begin as the Greens near office. And there were signs this week of the pressure the party is under to water-down its "eco-populist" message.

In a recent interview with the Politico website, three party officials explained that they are preparing a policy review.

Two of them said the party's immigration policy is earmarked for change. Currently, the Greens say it "wants to see a world without borders" while it would implement a "fair and humane system of managed migration" before then.

Polanski's refusal to accept the lie that immigration is a problem has inspired so many to join and vote for the party.

So what's behind the worrying signs that the party might change tack? The Greens were always a party of two halves—pitching as a left of Labour alternative in the cities, but as a greener version of the Lib Dems in rural areas. The party's right wing is now keen to push back on some of Polanski's radicalism.

Some of its officials are worried about how radical principles play in right wing media. "Right now, it's like we've got a list of policies for the Daily Mail to ring us up about," one said. They think that with the left vote sewn up, the party should now pivot rightwards to have more "mainstream appeal".

Pressure

The underlying pressure to moderate is rooted in the nature of electoralism—which sees change as coming primarily through winning votes. And, if you want to run the British state, you're under pressure to show the establishment a safe pair of hands.

The Greens are already trying to reassure the bosses that it is a "responsible" potential party of government. One official described the Greens policies as "not a policy platform for government".

This search for respectability pressures all left wing electoral projects. Your Party would have come under exactly the same pressures as the Greens. The closer a party is to office, the greater the pull.

If the Green Party wins councils, it will be tested even further. Will its councillors refuse to implement austerity? Or will they argue that cuts are the only realistic and sensible option?

For example, in Hackney, east London, the Greens could well win the council. As the housing and cost of living crises rage, more and more working class families are being priced out of the borough. This means there is a schools funding crisis, and councils are under pressure to merge or shut them.

How will the Greens respond? One way is to accept the rules of official politics and implement cuts and closures—however reluctantly. Another, more insurgent vision would see councillors rebelling to win more funding, standing on picket lines and protests and campaigning. Trade unionists, socialists and campaigners will have to lead such fightbacks under Green-run councils—and call on Green Party members to be part of them.

We celebrate whenever Polanski gives Starmer or Farage a bloody nose. But we still need a socialist alternative that sees building struggles outside of electoral politics as key to winning change.

ANALYSIS

ROB HOVEMAN



Trump's task to force Starmer on Malvinas

DONALD TRUMP'S war on Iran continues to fracture the Nato imperialist alliance. Rumours have emerged that Trump is considering supporting Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas, known in Britain as the Falkland Islands.

Trump is angered by Keir Starmer's failure to give full backing to his murderous Iran war. No doubt the US president would also like to reward his far right ally, Argentinian president Javier Milei.

The Malvinas are some 8,000 miles from Britain, in the South Atlantic and just 300 miles off the shores of Argentina. They currently have a tiny population of less than 4,000, mostly of British heritage.

They are a colonial aberration dating back 200 years to the rivalry between British and Spanish imperialism. They have been a source of Argentinian nationalist resentment ever since.

A brutal right wing military junta took power in Argentina in 1976. It enjoyed strong support from Western imperialism.

US president Ronald Reagan saw the junta as allies against the threat of left-wing, anti-American populism in the US's backyard. The British trained its navy. The French supplied it with advanced missiles.

By 1981, the junta was in economic and political trouble, and desperate for a cause to bring it popular support. It invaded the Malvinas in early 1982.

The British popular press immediately whipped up jingoism about British sovereignty over the islands and the plight of the islanders now under the jackboot of the fascist junta.

Michael Foot, the left-wing leader of the Labour Party, pathetically capitulated to the jingoism and gave his wholehearted support to a rapidly assembled armada.

The "taskforce" was seen off by cheering crowds from Portsmouth for the long trek to the South Atlantic.

Some on the left, like Tony Benn, claimed at the time that there was an economic motivation for the attempt to reclaim the islands for British sovereignty, specifically claims to future oil exploration in the Antarctic. Some 44 years on and the primary export from the islands is the Patagonian longfin squid, bringing in about £300 million a year.

Unpopular

The Falklands War was in fact the "War of Thatcher's Face". It was the means by which then prime minister Margaret Thatcher, deeply unpopular as unemployment soared to over three million, both saved her premiership and went on to win two more general elections.

Reagan and his administration were initially reluctant to support the British attempt to retake the islands. In the end, he saw it as a choice between Thatcher and the junta and chose Thatcher as the more important ally.

As a consequence, the US provided logistical support to the British taskforce. Reagan and Thatcher together went on to be the architects of the anti-trade union, anti-Soviet, new neoliberal order.

Some 650 Argentine conscripts died to save Thatcher's political career.

323 of them died when the Belgrano, an Argentinian battleship, was sunk by a British nuclear submarine on 2 May. It was outside the total exclusion zone declared by the British and was sailing away from the islands.

The Sun despicably screamed "Gotcha" on its front page. More than 250 British soldiers also died and hundreds on both sides suffered serious injury.

Trump is now desperate for revenge not just on the Starmer government, but on a Europe he believes has betrayed him by failing to give wholehearted support to his disastrous Iran adventure.

Supporting Argentina over the Malvinas is one of a list of ideas, including the expulsion of Spain from Nato, that have been floated as punishment for this disobedience.

Ironically, Starmer has abandoned at Trump's behest handing over Diego Garcia, another colonial aberration, to Mauritius. Trump wants to continue to use Diego Garcia for his imperialist adventures. And he clearly trusts Mauritius even less to guarantee continued US access.

Starmer may be tempted to play the jingo card over the Malvinas to try and save his premiership, as Thatcher did. But even this won't stop Labour's election meltdown in May.

LETTERS

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

Shabana Mahmood is doing the far right's work

LABOUR HOME secretary Shabana Mahmood said "white liberals" can "fuck right off" when anti-racists called out her racism last week.

Hecklers at a live interview said she was "out-Reforming Reform UK" with the barrage of racist policies she's implemented.

Mahmood claimed this was "just a way of delegitimising the point of view that I bring to the table."

"I do think there is that element of it, which is, 'How dare you, a brown

woman, say a thing that we white liberals think you're not allowed to say?"

"Well, I'm saying it."

Bullying

This is bullying. It's emotional blackmail. Mahmood wants to push the narrative of the "good migrant"—that if you behave well, then you deserve to be here. But this is all a smokescreen for vile politics and vile policies.

Think about the reality most migrants live in. You're in a really poorly

paid job. You've got to stomp up all this cash to stay, just to be insulted by mainstream politicians.

Mahmood is bullying the most vulnerable in our society to cover up for Labour's failures.

She's dismissing people who have serious concerns about racism as being part of the woke brigade. And she's doing it to outdo the far right.

It's all because she wants to try and blame all the economic problems on migrants.

They want us to believe that we spend all this

money housing, feeding and educating migrants.

But how much money have we spent on arming Israel? Why are we spending money on that and then persecuting the most vulnerable people in society?

But how much of our GDP is actually spent on this compared to how much profit they make in the City of London?

I'm not a white liberal—and I think she's doing the work of the far right.

Sam Vacciana
South London

A socialist's must read

JUDY COX'S article on sex work (SW 22 April) is a must read for all socialists.

It intervenes in the long-running debate of whether sex work is structurally tied to women's oppression or if it is another form of labour.

The article, correctly in my opinion, approaches sex work as any other form of labour.

Cox situates sex work within a materialistic framework, rather than approaching it as a moralistic question. She highlights that sex work cannot be liberating when it emerges from capitalist and patriarchal social relations.

Women's oppression is historically rooted in the rise of class society, where the family is an economic unit. Sex work is the product of this system shaped by exploitation and inequality.

Cox also, importantly, discusses the danger of criminalising sex work—using the Nordic Model as an example.

Included in the article are many other examples, both modern and historical, of how legislation has affected sex workers.

Capitalism allows the market to monetise every part of our lives. Sex is no different. Judy Cox has made this incredibly clear.

Audrey Martin
Glasgow



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Campaign to keep Palantir out of NHS

NHS BOSSES know that the £330 million contract with Palantir is both inefficient and morally reprehensible.

You just have to Google Palantir these days to see the complaints against it. And yet NHS bosses have threatened workers with the sack if they criticise or campaign against the contract.

Palantir is a military tech company with a horrendous record. It is responsible for Ice in the US and for drones over Gaza.

As patients we do not want them handling our health data.

We have collected thousands of signatures to stop our hospital using Palantir. So far they have not committed to it. There is a more effective system that Manchester and Leeds NHS use.

Palantir's nasty practices are a reflection of what happens when you try to make money out of health needs.

We don't want any privatisation in our NHS. Staff and patients need to unite in saying "Get Palantir out of the NHS."

Shirley Franklin
Convener of Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition
North London

Stop strip searches

A NEW report has found that black children are eight times more likely to be strip searched than their white peers.

This not only submits children to a humiliating and traumatising practice, but is blatantly racist.

Six years after the horrific Child Q case—which left a black child in severe mental distress after a strip search—the same powers are still abused.

These searches are unnecessary and unsafe. And this figure isn't coincidence—it's systemic racism.

Elliot Wright
Liverpool

Global South will pay the price for Trump's war on Iran

A crisis of this sort can push struggling people to breaking point. But it can also be the trigger for mass protests, writes **Camilla Royle**

AROUND THE world people are bracing themselves for a hunger crisis as the impact of Donald Trump's war on Iran hits.

The blockades of the Strait of Hormuz have seen the price of oil rise by 50 percent over its pre-war levels. And it has left countries around the world scrambling to locate fuel.

Many countries in the Global South are vulnerable due to the way the Green Revolution transformed agriculture from the 1960s on.

The Green Revolution meant agriculture was more dependent on fuel for farm equipment and on artificial fertilisers and pesticides.

In the past two decades, the Gulf states have become central to producing the chemicals used in fertilisers like ammonia, sulphur and urea.

The Persian Gulf is also a trade corridor through which large amounts of commodities destined for Asia and Africa are transported.

According to the United Nations World Food Programme, if the closure of the Strait continues, it will push a further 45 million people into acute hunger.

Many of them will be in places already struggling with a burden of debt. Developing countries collectively owed £30 billion in debt in 2024 and spent £680 billion just on interest payments in that year.

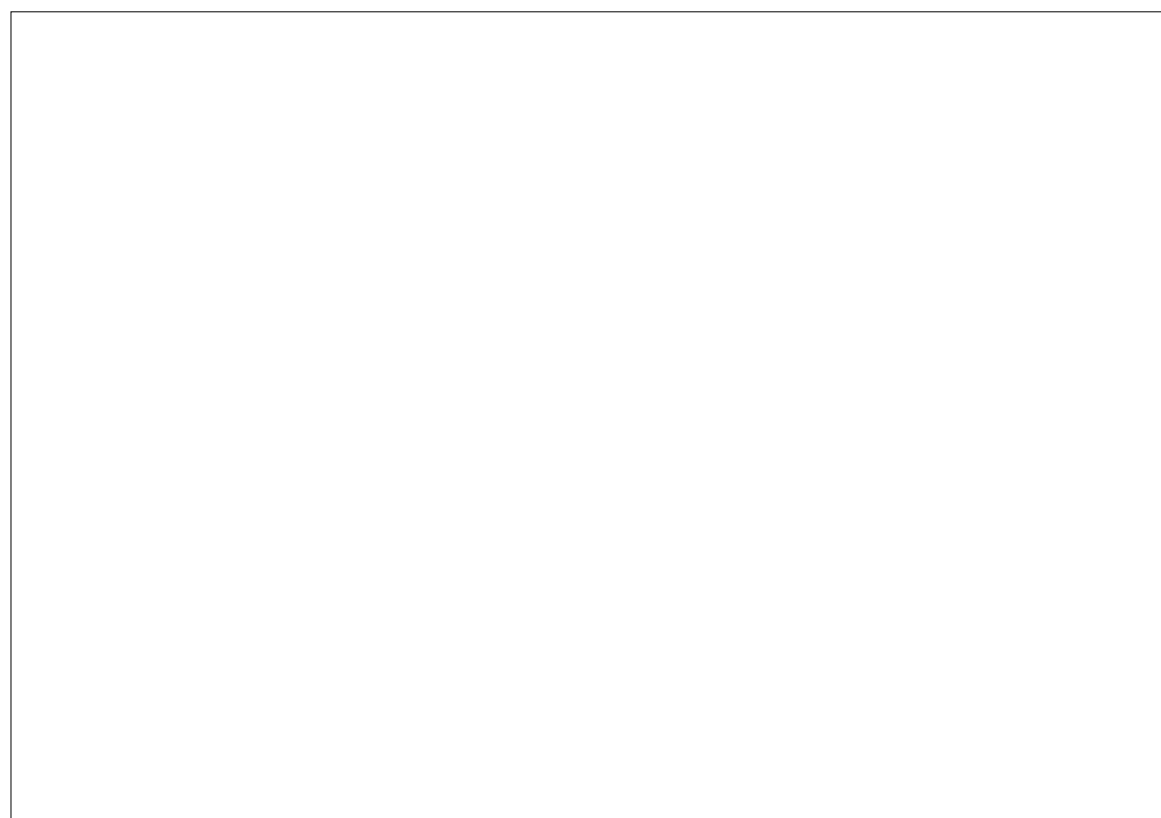
Some 3.4 billion people live in countries where more money is spent on debt interest payments than on health or education.

Debt makes it more difficult for states to find cash to cope with the fuel shortages. And inflation will compound the problem by pushing up interest rates.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh was one of the first Global South countries to be hit after the closure of the Strait.

In early March, it shut down



MOTORCYCLISTS QUEUE for fuel in Bangladesh (above) An Indonesian oil tanker (below)

all universities and four of its five state-run fertiliser factories. By April, the shortage of diesel was also affecting irrigation in agriculture.

A student-led uprising overthrew Sheikh Hasina's government in 2024. But the political beneficiary has been the right wing Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which has called for austerity measures to cope with the crisis.

Egypt

Egypt is one of the largest energy importers in the Middle East. It is also the world's second most indebted country to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan shark.

The cost of its imports has risen as the Egyptian pound has been devalued since the start of the war. The state has responded by raising fuel prices by up to 30 percent.

The war has deepened already existing food insecurity in Egypt and other countries in the region.

The Arab Barometer survey found that even before the conflict, six in ten Egyptians had frequent concerns about securing enough food.

The war has meant a dramatic change in cities such as Cairo.

Thousands of billboards have

been powered down. Streetlights are turned off. Businesses ranging from restaurants, to shops and cafes are forced to shut at 9pm on weekdays and 10pm on weekends.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka imports 60 percent of its fuel. It only has the capacity to store around a month's worth of supplies.

The state has rationed petrol and diesel, leaving drivers queuing up to collect their share.

Sri Lanka has also shut down government offices and schools every Wednesday to save energy.

Countries like Sri Lanka, that import both fuel and fertilisers, are hit twice by the closure of the Strait. Sri Lanka imports fertilisers from China. But China obtains sulphur,

one of the key ingredients, from the Middle East via the Strait.

It means that food prices in Sri Lanka are set to rise by 15 percent.

In 2022, there was a mass uprising that overthrew the hated government of Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Back then, Sri Lankans were queuing for fuel because the state didn't have the foreign currency reserves to import it.

This time Sri Lanka could again face an economic crisis. It has a more left wing government led by Anura Kumara Disanayake.

But he still faces demands from the bosses and the IMF to continue with the austerity of his predecessors.

The state is effectively subsidising fuel. It is absorbing some of the cost

of importing it rather than passing the pain onto consumers. But there are limits to how much states can subsidise costs, especially for poorer countries like Sri Lanka.

Zambia

Zambia is heavily dependent on imports, with little ability to refine its own fuel.

The southern African country could be the worst affected by the rising cost of food, with projected rises of 30 percent.

The state has announced a three-month suspension of taxes on fuel that means it will lose £150 million in tax revenue.

Finance minister Situmbeko Musokotwane, from the liberal UPND, said he worries about the supply of fuel as well as its cost.

And there are concerns about the effect on the mining sector. Mining for raw materials is critical to Zambia's economy and is reliant on imported diesel.

Indonesia

Indonesia was the site of a "Gen Z" uprising last year. Thousands of people took to the streets in response to austerity, precarious work and state violence.

The country faces rising oil prices and currency devaluation. The costs mean the state could spend an additional £10 billion on fuel subsidies this year.

The state's cuts will impact the poorest the hardest. The free school meals programme was already flagging due to mismanagement. Now the state is reducing the distribution of free meals from six days to five.

And all subsidised fuel is capped at 50 litres per vehicle per month.

For farmers, fishers and e-hailing drivers, including services equivalent to Uber, the increased costs will eat away at their livelihoods.

A rise in the cost of living can push already struggling people to crisis point. It can also be the trigger for mass protests.

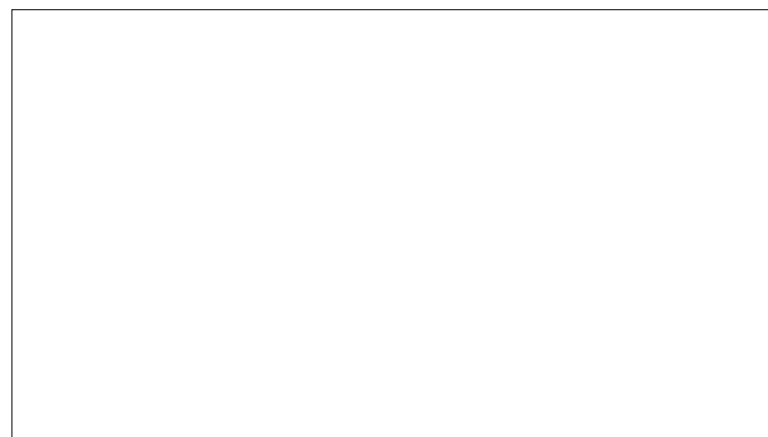
In 2008, a global food crisis sparked riots and rebellions in Egypt, Mauritania, Mozambique, Bolivia, Indonesia and elsewhere. Governments were toppled in Haiti and Madagascar.

People in the Global South need radical solutions, cancellation of debt and a switch away from fossil fuel intensive forms of agriculture, transport and electricity generation.

Whether states demand this or whether they push the costs onto the poorest will depend on how much people can organise and resist austerity.



The war has meant a dramatic change in everyday lives in cities across Asia and Africa



SHOPLIFTERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST RIGHT WING VILIFICATION

THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS PLAYED OUT IN OUR SHOPS

A moral panic is being stirred up over shoplifting. But Kerry and Ben told **Jude McKechnie** they don't feel bad for doing what they have to do to cope with the cost of living. And shop worker Joanne explains why more people turn to stealing

SHOPLIFTING IS on the rise. Politicians warn of a breakdown in law and order. And supermarket retailers say theft is “spiralling out of control”, as they lose billions in profits a year.

Figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales show shoplifting offences are now at their highest level since current police recording practices began in March 2003.

There were over half a million recorded offences in England and Wales in 2025 according to the Office for National Statistics.

If you were to take this narrative at face value, you would think that Britain is in moral decline.

But the headlines warning of a “shoplifting epidemic” leave out the most important fact. People aren't stealing more because they've suddenly become less honest. They're stealing because life is increasingly unaffordable.

Deprived

The reality is a pensioner slipping a packet of cheese into their coat. A parent skipping scanning baby formula at a self-checkout. A teenager pocketing a sandwich.

Kerry, who lives in Haghill, one of the most deprived areas in the east end of Glasgow, told Socialist Worker that they started stealing at a young age.

“I've lived in poverty for most of my life and worked with people living in poverty for many years,” they said. “I've been totally surrounded by it. I feel a



As a kid I always saw other people having nice things and I thought I deserved that too

huge anger towards a world that is happy to construct this kind of standard of living for people.

“I used to take silly things that my parents wouldn't have been able to afford. I remember stealing a bouncy ball at a corner shop. As a kid, I always saw other people having nice things and I thought I deserved that too,” they said.

Supermarket bosses offer us a world of satisfying consumer goods—but millions of people can't even afford the basics (above) Infant formula food is being security tagged in some Tesco's (left) Shop security guards are pushed to put themselves in danger for company profits (below)

“As an adult, I had some rules for myself with it. I don't take anything from small businesses, only big supermarkets and shops.”

Kerry explained that witnessing poverty caused their attitude to change.

“I've seen new mothers not having food for their children or themselves. I've seen the effects of homelessness and immigration laws barring people from being able to work, who were forced to steal so as not to die in the street,” they said.

“Working class and marginalised people get the short end of the stick every time. We know that no one is coming to save us.”

Community

“We generally understand this and it doesn't change the fact that when we wake up in the morning we need to feed ourselves and

our families,” they said.

“I think it's really sad that we've gotten to a place where people are angrier at petty theft than the state of the country.”

“We all know that it's become extremely difficult to afford to live. I wish we could be in a community with our neighbours creating networks where people don't need to risk as much by stealing. If they do see it happening, I wish people wouldn't grass people in or shame them for it.”

Kerry said, “If companies are allowed to create prices based on greed, and people are continually allowed to fall

An empty fridge is a reality. According to Action for Children some 4.5 million children are living in poverty in Britain. That's a 100,000 increase since Labour came to power (above)

through the cracks, I refuse to feel bad for doing what I can to make my life a little bit easier, a little bit nicer.”

In the five years leading up to last July, food prices increased by 37 percent, compared to a rise of 4.4 percent over the preceding five-year period.

The result is that Britain is catastrophically afflicted by food poverty.

According to surveys by the anti-poverty charity Trussell Trust, more than 14 million people across Britain faced going hungry last year due to a lack of money.

Ben is one of thousands of people living in London who struggle to keep up with unaffordable rents and rising prices. Like many of them, he has turned to shoplifting for basic items like food and toiletries that he doesn't have the money to pay for.

Ben told Socialist Worker that he hadn't even considered shoplifting until he started working at a Sainsbury's supermarket. He explained how disgusted he had been by how much food got thrown out on a daily basis by the multi-billion pound company. When he left that job and was out of work, he never forgot this.

Profits

“So much food gets wasted,” he said. “That food could be going to feed people. The food that's going into the bin is the same food being left on the shelves because people literally just can't afford it.”

“That's why I only steal from the big supermarkets. I know how much money

they are making and that they don't need the profits.

“Once the penny drops that these companies are the ones stealing from you, you just stop feeling bad about taking anything. In fact, I get such a buzz doing it now.”

In response to the rising cases of shoplifting, right wing politicians and the press have called for tougher policing, stricter penalties and greater retail security.

Instead of addressing the crisis, the Crime and Policing Bill currently being debated in parliament removes the £200 threshold that previously diverted low value thefts away from the courts. It means more people will be criminalised for trying to survive. But Ben said that criminalisation won't stop people from shoplifting.

“I've been caught on more than one occasion by security, but most of the time they just give you a warning,” he told Socialist Worker.

Crime

“I think they know how tough it is to get by and that it's not a crime that's actually hurting anyone. And honestly, tightening punishment without tackling poverty simply shifts the problem, rather than solving it. The government can

push to increase arrests. You can expand surveillance and have more guards on doors.

“But when wages don't cover rent, when benefits don't cover food, when prices rise faster than incomes, people find ways to cope,” Ben said.

“Calling this a ‘crime wave’ covers up what it really is—a cost of living crisis playing out in every local Tesco and Co-op. And actually it's cruel to ask people to accept the cheapest food and the worst produce because it's all they can afford.

“Why should people accept less just because of the hand they're dealt? I didn't cause this cost of living crisis. So, why should I be paying for it? Why should anyone?”

Shoplifting, at its core, is not just about theft. It's about what kind of society we accept.

Do we accept one where people are criminalised for taking essentials while structural inequalities deepen? Or do we resist it and push to shift the focus to ensuring that everyone can meet their basic needs?

The current panic shows a system more comfortable punishing the symptoms than addressing the causes.

Until that changes, the headlines will keep coming—and so will the theft.

‘Addiction is one of the biggest reasons for theft’

RETAILERS CLAIM shoplifting costs them billions a year. But large supermarket chains and retail giants operate with vast revenues.

And losses from theft are factored into business models, offset through pricing, insurance and cost-cutting—often at the expense of workers and their wages. Retail workers sit at the centre of this contradiction.

Joanne worked in a Tesco supermarket for over four years as a retail assistant. She explained to Socialist Worker that survival-driven theft is being treated as a national emergency, while the everyday realities of low wages and high prices are not.

“I saw people stealing on almost every shift I worked,” she said.

“One occasion still lives in my head, it was a man who was stealing baby formula. He broke down and explained that he couldn't afford to buy formula for his newborn baby.

“Don't get me wrong, some people were stealing just for the thrill, especially teenagers who just wanted some free stuff. But I don't think it's just a black and white situation where you can say that person is bad because they are stealing.



Supermarket workers face low pay and insecurity yet are expected to enforce the firm's rules

“I think the biggest reason why people were stealing was due to addiction,” she said.

“One way or another, most of the shoplifters did it because their world and community failed them. People with addiction do it because they don't get enough support to help them overcome their problems. Many of them were some of the nicest people, it was just that life had been hard and had created endless cycles of tough living situations.”

Capitalism creates circumstances where people steal out of desperation. It is also a competitive system, where we are constantly given the message that we should own the latest gadget or keep up with the latest fashions.

Big fashion brands like Nike release new products constantly and tell fans not to miss the latest one.

Boredom

The system tells us that the things we own and the way we dress are a measure of our self-worth. It's no wonder that people want the same things they see other people buying.

And, Joanne adds, “Teenagers seemed only to be doing it to impress their friends.

“Unfortunately, a lot of deprived areas don't have the facilities for kids to avoid boredom and in this case, petty crime.”

Joanne highlighted that workers in supermarkets face low pay, insecure hours and rising workloads. Self-checkouts have also replaced staffed tills meaning there is a lot more job insecurity.

Yet they are expected to enforce rules, prevent theft and absorb the consequences when things go wrong.

“Supermarkets love employing young students because they know that this group is going to be more



ROSA Luxemburg was murdered in 1919 during the German Revolution on orders from the Social Democrats

She suffered a second murder at the hands of a social democrat last week in the pages of the left wing Morning Star newspaper.

With breathtaking irony, Claudia Webbe used Luxemburg to defend the Your Party leadership's decision to exclude the revolutionary left.

"There is a theoretical question at the heart of Your Party's April 2026 decision on membership eligibility, and it deserves a serious answer—not a bureaucratic one," Webbe writes.

She asks what kind of party the working class needs in Britain today.

"A disciplined vanguard, or a broad democratic mass party? An organisation built around the co-ordination of professional revolutionaries, or one built around the self-activity and democratic participation of the widest possible cross-section of the working class itself?"

No one was suggesting that Your Party should be organised as a "vanguard party".

The question was whether socialists already organised in such parties should be able to join Your Party on the basis of "dual membership".

So, how much truth is there in the claims that Webbe makes for Luxemburg?

And why would someone who died over a century ago have anything to tell us about how we organise today?

Webbe presents the argument as one between Luxemburg and Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin about how socialists organise.

Debates

She calls this "one of the deepest debates in the socialist tradition" and claims Luxemburg "spent much of her life engaged in precisely this debate with Lenin."

Webbe conflates two different debates—and presents us with a third, false one.

Luxemburg—born in 1871 in Poland, then part of the Russian Empire—was a leading revolutionary socialist from her teens until her death at the age of 47.

In 1898 she moved to Germany, the heart of the socialist movement.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) was the biggest Marxist organisation in the world.

But as soon as Luxemburg arrived in Berlin, she saw that it was beginning to change.

Activists were becoming administrators and elections were taking precedence over workers' struggles.

Sections of the leadership, led by Eduard Bernstein, argued that revolution was no longer necessary in an age of economic



THE DOUBLE MURDER OF LUXEMBURG

Sally Campbell, author of A Rebel's Guide to Rosa Luxemburg, reclaims her revolutionary legacy from a web of lies being spun by the Your Party leadership



Sally Campbell

growth and democratic reform. A mass socialist party could focus on winning reforms through parliament.

She rejected Bernstein's blinkered view of capitalism. A few years without an economic crisis did not mean that the underlying anarchy of the system had been fixed.

This was the debate that actually took up much of Luxemburg's life—captured in her pamphlet, *Reform or Revolution*.



Claudia Webbe conflates two debates and presents a third, false one

Fundamentally, she defended the central Marxist principle that the "emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class".

Socialism cannot be brought about by electing socialists to a parliament built to defend ruling class interests or using the structures of the capitalist state.

Instead, working class people have to take power and run society from below. Luxemburg saw the fight for reforms as part of the bigger struggle for

revolution, not a replacement for it.

She understood immediately that the SPD's direction was not "a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal."

Over a century of experience has taught us that she was right to say that capitalism cannot be peacefully reformed away.

She argued so confidently inside the SPD that one leading member referred to her, with a subtle hint of racism, as "a guest who comes to us and spits in our parlour".

Luxemburg battled the conservatism of the SPD leadership. When unofficial strikes periodically broke out in the industrial regions of Germany, Luxemburg looked to the ingenuity of the workers themselves.

The SPD leadership looked to the trade union bureaucrats, who often condemned workers for not going through "the proper channels".

Webbe is not wrong when quotes Luxemburg saying workers "would come to political consciousness not through the transmission of a correct party line from above". They would do so "through their own collective experience of struggle, of solidarity, of discovering their power through using it."

What Webbe fails to note is that most of the time, the party Luxemburg was criticising was the SPD.

LUXEMBURG did engage in tactical debates with Lenin about organisation. But it is important to state that Lenin and Luxemburg were comrades.

The idea that they were fundamentally opposed was invented after they were both dead.

It was first done by Joseph Stalin's state capitalist regime in Russia, which buried all the gains of the Russian Revolution of 1917. He was building a cult of Lenin from the ashes of the revolution.

The new, anti-Stalinist left that came out of the struggles of the 1960s rightly praised Luxemburg, but also accepted the Stalinist caricature of Lenin.

Before 1914 Luxemburg—along with everyone else in the socialist movement—thought the SPD was the model for socialist organisation.

The tighter organisation Lenin was building in Russia, the Bolsheviks, was a result of the special conditions of organising under the tsarist dictatorship.

Luxemburg was concerned that the centralised leadership advocated by Lenin could lead to the party "going astray" from the masses.

Lenin's position on the relationship between party and class changed over time, as did Luxemburg's. Both were shaped by the different conditions they were battling. Luxemburg

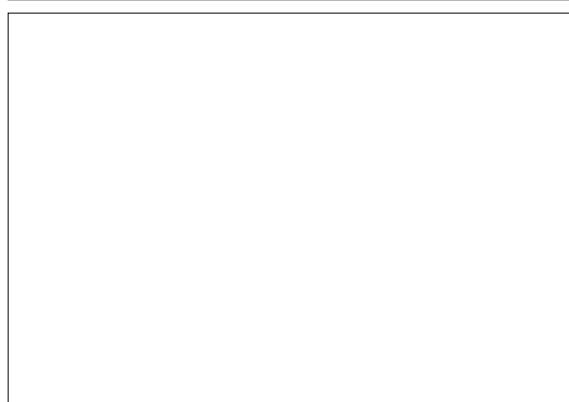
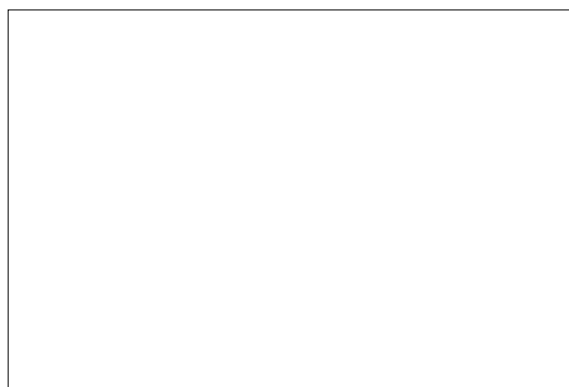
against the conservatism of the SPD and Lenin against the relative immaturity and lack of organisation in the Russian socialist movement.

The start of the First World War was a key turning point.

It exposed the trajectory of the SPD and similar organisations. In August 1914, the SPD MPs voted to support the imperialist war. The party's commitment to the nation state outweighed its commitment to peace.

Luxemburg spent much of the war in prison, but she continued to write. When news of the Russian Revolution reached her in 1917, she praised the Bolsheviks for grasping the moment.

Her 1918 essay, *The Russian Revolution*, criticises the suppression of some democratic rights to put down counter-revolutionary forces in the immediate aftermath of the October revolution. But that's in the context of an overall vigorous defence of the revolution.



The Freikorps far right militia, directed by the Social Democratic government, murdered Rosa Luxemburg (top) Jeremy Corbyn's Your Party has excluded revolutionary socialists from membership (above)

are reactionaries who buy into the system. The majority sit somewhere in between, with progressive and backward ideas.

A reformist party reflects all of those contradictions and panders to backward ideas. A revolutionary one organises together the most militant fighters to shape the broader struggles.

Luxemburg supported the idea of a vanguard—a party of revolutionary socialists who are already convinced of the need to overthrow the system.

The problem was that she was in a party that was rapidly moving away from that role—and, even after the disaster of 1914, she remained inside. She and her supporters only left to form a separate party during the revolution in 1918.

The SPD model failed the test of the First World War and the German Revolution. During it, the SPD formed the government and did everything it could to stifle workers' revolution.

Revolutionaries today also have a role in calling out the disastrous effects of capitalism—and more importantly, arguing for a strategy to take our side forward.

Luxemburg was one of the greatest revolutionaries of a generation. She saw the birth of mass workers' movements, colonialism, the First World War and the only successful—albeit brief—workers' revolution.

It is a shame to see her legacy twisted again. I recommend you read her works yourself.

READ MORE

● **A Rebel's Guide to Rosa Luxemburg**
By Sally Campbell
£4

● **Reform or Revolution**
By Rosa Luxemburg
£4

● **The Mass Strike**
By Rosa Luxemburg
£5

Available at Bookmarks.
bookmarksbooks.com



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM
with Judy Cox

How do capitalists pile up profits?

LAST WEEK, we saw how Karl Marx analysed primitive accumulation as, "the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production".

But does primitive accumulation belong only to the past? After all, as we move into a new era of AI high-tech capitalism, older displays of class power and conquest have reemerged.

Rosa Luxemburg thought primitive accumulation was a constant feature of capitalism. In her 1913 book *The Accumulation of Capital*, she criticised Marx's theory of primitive accumulation.

Luxemburg argued that capitalists always produced more than they could sell.

To profit, they needed non-capitalist societies to become new markets.

Capitalism must, therefore, constantly resort to conquest to force what Luxemburg called "natural economies" to open up to colonial powers.

There are two problems with Luxemburg's argument. First, it was not primarily a lack of demand that drove colonialisation—it was the capitalist need for cheap labour and resources to steal.

Second, today there are few places on the planet that could be said to be "outside" the system. Yet capitalism has not collapsed.

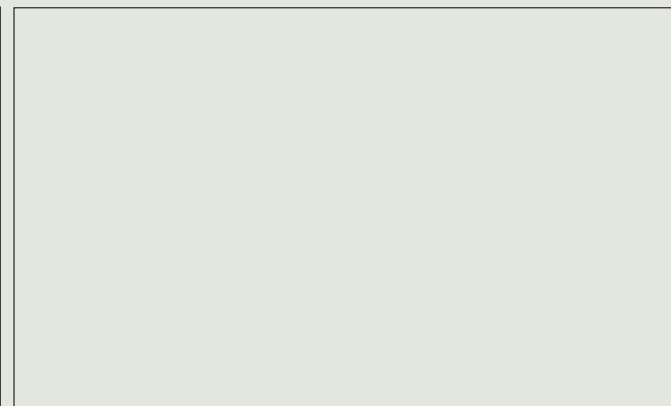
Nevertheless Luxemburg's work is powerful in foregrounding ongoing colonial violence. Her approach has been developed by contemporary Marxist theorist David Harvey.

Theft

In his theory of "accumulation by dispossession", Harvey describes how capitalism continues to steel for profit.

In his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, he writes of the "continuation and proliferation of accumulation practices which Marx had treated of as 'primitive' or 'original' during the rise of capitalism".

Harvey describes the displacement of peasant populations and the formation of a landless proletariat in



MARCH AGAINST water privatisation in the Spanish state

places such as India. He looks at the privatisation of formerly common resources, such as water, and the suppression of alternative forms of production and consumption.

A powerful instrument of this dispossession is, Harvey argues, the use of credit through institutions such as the International Monetary Fund. This forces nation states to privatise their assets.

Harvey concludes that the left must focus less on workers' struggles against exploitation and more on social movements against dispossession. This theory captured the imagination of large sections of the left. But there are weaknesses.

Harvey argues that accumulation by dispossession became increasingly important to the system because of a long period of economic crisis which began in the 1970s.

Neoliberalism, he argues, was based not on generating wealth, but on redistributing existing wealth from the mass of the population towards the upper classes or from countries in the Global South



Neoliberalism, argues Harvey, is based on redistributing existing wealth

to richer countries. During neoliberalism, Harvey writes, "accumulation by dispossession became the dominant form of accumulation". But this underplays the continuing importance of the exploitation of workers in the Global North.

Harvey includes different processes in his accumulation by dispossession, many of which are general features of capitalism.

Closures

One of his examples is Enron, the giant corporation which stole from pension funds and axed unprofitable branches of its business empire. But such closures and takeovers are endemic to capitalism.

Competition drives companies to take over rivals and incorporate or close them. Marx called this the concentration and centralisation of capital.

Harvey champions working class struggles that take place at the point of production. But he frames such struggles as echoes of the past.

And he sees a gap between working class struggles and popular movements over issues such as privatisation. But popular movements against privatisation have always been important elements of working class resistance.

The struggles of the working class and other oppressed peoples are intertwined. The fight against exploitation, state coercion, colonial violence and access to natural resources are the same fight—a fight a united working class has the power to win.

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

Come to a socialist meeting near you

THE Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has branches all over Britain. We meet most weeks, usually on a Wednesday or Thursday, to discuss politics and to plan activities.

The branch meeting normally has a speaker who opens a discussion in which all are free to join in.

Afterwards, we plan the party's involvement in local and national movements.

Our meetings are open to the public and we encourage participation.

For a local branch, look at the list and scan the QR code.

Scotland

- Aberdeen
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow North
- Glasgow South

North

- Lancaster and Morecambe
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Liverpool
- Wigan

Yorkshire and Humberside

- Bradford
- Huddersfield
- Hull
- Leeds
- Sheffield and South Yorkshire
- York and Scarborough
- Wakefield

Midlands

- Birmingham
- Black Country
- Coventry
- Crewe and Stoke
- Chesterfield
- Derby
- Leicester
- Nottingham

London

- Hackney
- Haringey
- Islington
- Newham
- South London
- South East London
- Tower Hamlets
- Waltham Forest
- West and North West London

South west

- Bristol
- Devon and Exeter
- Dorset

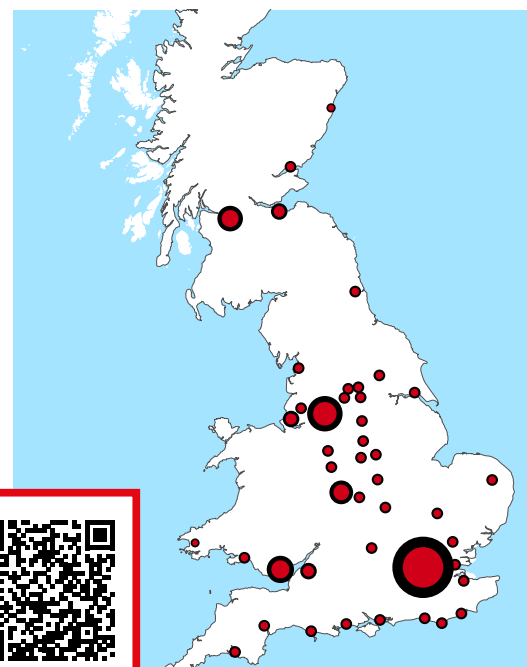
- Plymouth and Cornwall
- Portsmouth

East and south east

- Brighton and Hove
- Bournemouth
- Cambridge
- Colchester
- Eastbourne
- Harlow
- Hastings
- Kent
- Northampton
- Norwich and East Anglia
- Oxford
- Southend

Wales

- Cardiff
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- West Wales



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Honouring the music that transformed Britain

by YURI PRASAD

THE NEW wing of the V&A cultural museum has opened in east London with a triumph.

Its inaugural exhibition, The Music Is Black, tells the story of the sounds that changed Britain for the better—and that remain a bulwark against racism today. The journey starts where it must—with enslavement, colonialism and resistance.

We learn of a slave owner thrilled by the African music being played on his family’s plantation. And how from the 17th century on, early scientists classified humanity into hierarchies, an essential justification for slavery.

So begins a contradiction. Our rulers were both fascinated by black culture and repulsed by what they thought of as an “inferior species.”

The curators have amassed a huge range of artefacts, from paintings, books, costumes and instruments, through to rare video footage. By placing them in a historical context, we can see how the music we love was shaped not only by the political and racial climate of the times, but also by cultural movements that preceded it.

The post-war African independence movements created black pride that flowed into music, particularly in the 1970s and 80s.

SIR COXSONE Outernational Sound System

The huge influence of artists such as Manu Dibango and Fela Kuti on British dancefloors cannot be understood without anti-colonialism.

These Afrobeat heroes inspired the music that became Brit Funk and the explosion of black British pop music.



The black music on show is a testament to struggle

The original sound of African liberation is today found in the modern Afrobeats genre. It’s also in the London jazz renaissance, led by artists including Ezra Collective, Nubya Garcia and The Comet Is Coming.

All visitors are offered a headset equipped with near-field communication. As you walk towards particular exhibits and videos, the relevant soundtrack plays.

Occasionally, as you walk between genres, the music forms mix. That may be unintentional, but the effect can be brilliant.

One of the highlights for me was the respect paid to early British hip hop. This scene began as imitation,

with MCs like Derek B trying their best to be American, but soon graduated to something far more authentic.

The London Posse were among those who rapped in a hybrid of British cockney and Jamaican slang.

The curators rightly acknowledge that they were among the rappers that cleared the way for the UK Garage, Grime and Bashment that followed.

The decades of black music on show are not only a testament to past struggles—they are part of the glue that holds together working class Britain, black and white.

The Music Is Black is on until 3 January 2027, V&A East, London, E20 2AR

CINEMA

Anti-colonialism sharply reimagined for today

FRENCH DIRECTOR François Ozon’s new film brings Albert Camus’ novel The Stranger into the 21st century.

Benjamin Voisin plays main character Meursault as the perfect heartless void. He learns his mother has died and barely shrugs. Not quite stoical, just switched off. Who knew indifference could be portrayed with such depth?

Still set in Algeria during the French Empire, the film sharpens the novel’s colonial rot through a contemporary lens.

In Camus’ 1942 original the murdered man is simply “the Arab” and his sister a complete non-entity.

Here they become Moussa and Djemila, abused and exploited Algerians granted names and glimpses of humanity.

A pointed dialogue between characters Djemila and Marie on racial injustice lands like a slap.

Meursault drifts on, blithely unaware while chatting to a sex worker, shrugging at marriage, watching his neighbour beat his dog and his mate



batter his girlfriend. Meursault has the privilege not to care—until the beach. Here he shoots Moussa “because of the sun,” knowing a white could get away with it. Racist entitlement is dressed up as

existential whimsy. Ozon’s film is stunning visually and radiates heat.

It exposes the book’s casual bigotry even as it softens it. Meursault’s execution by a racist system is absurd as colonial justice rarely hanged its own and his final martyr pose is unintentionally comic. The alienated white man is recast as a tragic hero.

This is where the modern parallel bites hardest. Meursault’s chilling detachment mirrors today’s manosphere. Indifferent to

violence, entitled, floating above consequences until the system they serve turns on them.

Ozon nails how capitalism breeds this emotional desert of atomised settlers and brutalised natives while also using them as props.

Sharp and quietly furious, the film captures alienation brilliantly but pulls its punch on collective fury.

It is a devastating colonial critique that leaves you just a little fired up.

Maryam Tariq

In cinemas now

COMMENT HUSSEIN SAID

Trump is facing a historic crisis in Iran

DONALD TRUMP’S war on Iran has turned into the biggest crisis for US imperialism in its history.

It’s on a bigger scale than Iraq, Afghanistan or Vietnam—or even the Suez Crisis of 1956 that sunk the British Empire.

The crisis combines military escalation, economic shock and geopolitical fragmentation on a scale far beyond 1956.

The question is no longer whether the US can win in Iran, but whether it can impose order.

And that uncertainty is precisely what gives this crisis its historic weight.

Crucially, this is not a contained confrontation. It is entangled with an increasingly volatile Israel, emboldened yet vulnerable.

The alignment of the Gulf powers, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with the US is more transactional than at any point in decades.

And there’s the possibility that the Iranian regime could emerge as a strengthened regional player.

In that scenario, control over the Strait of Hormuz becomes not just a regional lever, but a global economic weapon.

At the same time, the US faces drift among its allies in Europe who want to preserve the liberal imperialist order.

Public opinion across both sides of the Atlantic has turned sharply against another prolonged war.

This erosion of both cohesion within the elites and popular consent limits the ability of the US to translate military power into political order.

What is at stake is no longer simply the outcome of a confrontation with Iran, but the viability of the entire architecture of US hegemony.

This broader unravelling extends across the Gulf. The long-standing arrangement—“security” in exchange for hosting US bases—is under visible strain.

Faced with the risk of being drawn into a widening war, these regimes are caught between dependence on the US and fear of becoming direct targets.

Even within this bloc, fractures are opening. Israeli media reported a de facto understanding between Qatar and Iran, reflected in the cessation of US attacks from Qatari territory and Iranian restraint.

Consequences

The implications run deeper than diplomatic manoeuvring. The Gulf states are being reminded that they sit below Israel in US strategic priorities.

The consequences for the regimes are domestic too—even regimes long presented as stable are showing signs of strain.

In Bahrain, murmurings last month that the ruling Al Khalifa family was preparing for evacuation underline the depth of anxiety.

External pressure and the high number of Shia Muslims in Bahrain—Iran is majority Shia too—certainly play a part.

But this is a story of internal contradictions in Bahrain, where the Arab Spring was crushed by Saudi military force in 2011, beginning to resurface.

Nor is the Iran crisis confined to the region.

Rival powers are actively shaping its trajectory. Russia is both profiting from rising oil prices and deepening its material support for Iran.

China appears to be using the conflict as a testing ground—reportedly supplying components and studying US systems, tactics and vulnerabilities in real time.

What is emerging is not simply a regional war, but a laboratory for a world in which US dominance is no longer uncontested.

There is no easy way out for Trump, who’s stuck between an Iranian “rock” and an Israeli “hard place”.

Iran benefits from prolonging the crisis, while Israel cannot accept any outcome in which Iran emerges strengthened.

The dynamic points towards further escalation as we’ve seen with the US blockade on the Strait of Hormuz.

Across the region, class tensions are rising within societies long held in place by repression.

These processes do not unfold in neat or predictable ways, but they point to a region in flux where old arrangements are coming undone.

For those in Britain, the implications are immediate. This is a deeply unpopular war that will be paid for through declining living standards and further pressure on the working class.

IN BRIEF

Exam board workers assess need for pay

WORKERS AT the country's largest exam board, AQA, have voted to strike for pay restoration.

The Unison union members voted by 79 percent to reject an above-inflation 5.4 percent pay rise. This comes a year after they accepted a 4 percent below inflation pay rise.

Over a million students sit AQA exams every year, with workers assessing more than half of all GCSE and A Level qualifications taken annually in England.

The AQA branch announced their successful ballot result at a rally of 100 people in Manchester last Friday.

Speakers included Unison activists and the union's general secretary Andrea Egan.

Win for Manchester porter drivers

DRIVERS AT Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust are celebrating after winning their battle for re-grading and backpay.

The Unison union members—who transport samples, medication, linen and food across the city—demanded the implementation of a regrading decided three years ago, which put them on band 3 of the NHS pay scale.

When the Trust refused, Unison took a series of strikes and threatened another three weeks of action, set to begin last week.

But bosses backed down and will now backdate the drivers' pay to July 2024, meaning a big payout for all those affected.

Unison north west regional organiser Paddy Cleary said, "This is a great result, but the drivers should never have needed to take strike action."

Welding lecturer strike stays strong

WELDING AND fabrication lecturers at City of Glasgow College are on strike from Monday to Thursday this week and from Tuesday to Friday next week.

The EIS-Fela union members are escalating their action because bosses have not provided them with adequate training and safety equipment.

Progress in London cleaners' dispute

CLEANERS IN the Caiwu union have suspended a strike that was set to take place this Thursday after making progress on their demands.

The cleaners work in properties managed by Argyll in Belgravia and the City of London. They are in dispute over a plan to reduce their working hours.

The union says the progress so far "reflects the strength of collective action and the pressure built by our members" but they remain ready to act.

AUSTERITY

Inflation makes us all poorer—unions should fight back

PRICES ARE rising so much faster than wages that this year's "pay rises" will actually leave workers worse off.

That's the shocking implication of new figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), published last week. Millions of people will feel the impact.

NHS admin worker and Unison union shop steward

Charlie says he and his colleagues are "already feeling poorer".

"It's getting towards the end of the month and I've got fuck all left to get me through the next week," he told Socialist Worker.

"My council tax has shot up, my bills are higher and, in Bristol, my rent is astronomical. Our pay just

doesn't keep up." Many health workers hoped for better under Labour. Now there's growing anger.

Charlie wants all the health unions to unite against the insulting 3.3 percent pay rise Labour imposed on most NHS workers this month.

"We've seen doctors and nurses strike. Now we all need to act," he said.

Nick, a local government worker and Unison activist in West Yorkshire, agrees.

"Not a day goes by without people complaining about prices. Right now, it's fuel," he told Socialist Worker. "Before that, it was food."

"Strikes are where our power lies," says Charlie. "We need leverage to force the government's hand."



Docs strike for pay and jobs

TRANSPORT

Tube drivers strike for shifts and safety

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

TUBE DRIVERS in the RMT union took to picket lines last week against bosses' imposition of a "fake four-day week".

An RMT union rep on the picket line in north London told Socialist Worker, "The company is trying to change our terms and conditions."

"If they want to bring in a four-day week, then they need to negotiate with our union. We want to move to a four-day working week, but not under these conditions," he said.

Drivers in the RMT want to work 32 hours over four days with no loss of pay, not the 35 hours currently proposed.

Operated

Your train could be operated by someone who started work at 3.45am but does not get a break for over five hours. After a half an hour break, they could be back at the controls for up to 9.5 hours.

The rep said, "The issue around fatigue is already



On the picket line

massive. This would make it much worse.

"This would mean you're going to have to go longer without a break. That causes fatigue, and fatigue causes mistakes and errors. And errors become incidents and accidents.

"Our job is a safety critical job. When we have a packed train we have at least 1,000 passengers on board," he explained.

This isn't all. Drivers might not know what shifts or the locations they are working until 24 hours before they are due to clock in.

Bosses have refused

to negotiate any of these changes with the RMT. They continue to insist on imposing it, unchanged.

The Aslef train drivers union represents just over half of London Underground train operators.

Proposals

Aslef members voted in favour of the proposals, with the union calling it a "once in a generation opportunity".

Another RMT union driver on the picket line highlighted the bosses' dirty tactics. They're hoping to pit the two unions against each other.

"When the offer was first put to us, the first word on the topic was that it was subject to an agreement by both unions."

Yet bosses are still trying to push through the changes with only the agreement of Aslef.

"This is one of the problems of having two unions not working together," the RMT member said.

Aslef drivers shouldn't cross the picket lines.

The tube workers are fighting for all our safety.

CLIMATE

Victory in fracking campaign

CAMPAIGNERS celebrated a victory against fracking outside Scarborough Town Hall on Friday of last week.

North Yorkshire Council's strategic planning committee resoundingly rejected the advice of council officials. It voted against an application by Europa Oil and Gas to frack on fragile coastline north of the town.

Over 1,600 people objected to the fracking plans. Activists marched to the proposed site, packed public meetings and showed up in force outside the town hall on the day of the hearing.

This was not a victory handed down from above.

It was won by ordinary people refusing to accept that a profit-hungry fossil fuel company had the right to gamble with their water, health and coastline.

John Atkinson of Frack Free Scarborough said, "This is what people power looks like. Hundreds of us stood outside Scarborough

Town Hall and the planning committee heard us."

Labour MP Alison Hume vowed to keep pressing until the loophole that allowed the application is closed for good.

Europa's plans for "proppant squeeze" was fracking by another name.

It would have used volumes of fracking fluid greater than those that caused the 2.9 magnitude earthquake at Preston New Road in Lancashire in 2019.

The government has indicated that it will consult on a permanent ban on fracking. Until it does, companies can apply to use techniques such as the "proppant squeeze".

Fracking remains a threat to communities across Britain and will deepen the climate crisis by locking us into more fossil fuel use.

But the message from Scarborough is clear—organise, resist, unite, and know that you can win.

Kim Hunter

REFUSE WORKERS

End in sight for bin strike?

THE LONG-RUNNING Birmingham bin strike could soon come to an end.

The Labour leader of the council John Cotton announced on Monday of this week that an end to the strike is "in sight" after talks between the bosses and the Unite union.

Around 350 refuse workers walked out on indefinite strike on 11 March last year over attempts to regrade them. The planned changes included removing the role of safety officer. They meant some workers would lose up to £8,000 a year.

Details of the "ballpark" deal are confidential until the council produces its full offer. But, according to the Unite union, it means the workers will be cushioned from the impacts of the evaluation process for at least two years.

It also offers a path to a permanent role for agency workers. At some points, these workers have taken part in the strikes.

The deal will need to be approved by whoever is running the council after the

7 May local elections. It will also need to be accepted by the workers.

But Labour is set to lose its huge majority on the council, with votes divided between a range of parties.

Green Party group leader Julien Pritchard accused Labour of playing "political games" by raising the prospect of a deal now.

The potential for a delay in the pay cut will be a relief to the striking workers.

But there were points in the strike when a much better deal could have been won.

A series of mega pickets at the depots and solidarity from other workers across Britain have provided a boost to the workers' morale and shown it is possible to shut the depots.

But instead of a strategy based on mass pickets, the Unite leadership has relied on the courts to challenge the council's strike-breaking tactics.

It has been an inadequate response to the Labour-run council's war on its low-paid workers.

OBITUARY

Penny Krantz
1943-2026

PENNY KRANTZ was a lifelong activist and revolutionary socialist. She was a trained shorthand typist, an essential skill when she joined the workforce.

Once, in the 1960s working as an office temp, management asked her to type a letter informing staff that they were sacked. She refused to type the letter and walked out.

Joining the International Socialists—forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party—in 1971 in Kingston, Penny quickly became indispensable to running the

party's office, including the demanding role as secretary for the Central Committee.

She later got a job at Manchester Polytechnic—now Manchester Metropolitan University—becoming an activist in Nalco, a forerunner of Unison. She was known by management as "Red Penny".

During one student occupation when bosses tried to turn the workers against students who had occupied their offices, Penny got the staff to back the students.

Penny was a keen anti-racist and anti-fascist activist. She was proud to have joined every protest against Tommy Robinson when local activists stopped

his election as a MEP

She was at every protest she could join—from the defence of Withington Hospital when the Tory health secretary got hit by eggs (Penny brought them) to demonstrations against the Tory party conference in Manchester.

Penny was not just a participant in our movement. She was a chronicler of it—taking photos and keeping leaflets and posters. She was a wonderfully kind and supportive person who will be missed by everyone who knew her.

Manchester SWP will be organising a memorial event in June.
Martin Empson

UNIVERSITIES

Workers in a battle against pension theft

by CAMILLA ROYLE

WORKERS AT Northumbria University, in Newcastle, staged huge picket lines last week as part of their battle over pensions. They are considering escalating their action.

The UCU union members are fighting bosses' attempts to remove them from the TPS pension scheme.

Workers who refuse to move to the USS pension scheme will have their pay frozen indefinitely as bosses attempt to save £25 million.

UCU branch chair Adam Hansen told Socialist Worker, "Bosses want to rip off our pay and pensions, rip up our contracts and rip us out of national collective bargaining."

Cuts mean workers will be paid differently based on what pension scheme they are in.

"You will have two people doing the same job, getting paid differently," Adam explained.

"Combined with people leaving the university, it means fewer people and

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY picket line

more work for less pay. That has got to impact the student experience.

Blackmail

"It will affect everyone. It will make the workplace more precarious, more insecure and more unfair. We cannot accept that."

One UCU member said, "Management is framing it as a choice, but it's more like blackmail. We can choose

between moving to a pension scheme that will leave many of us worse off, or accepting an indefinite pay freeze."

"However they dress it up, that's a pay cut. It feels like they don't value us, despite everything they ask us to do."

Another said, "When we strike, we lose our pay each day—I'm a single parent with three children living at home."

"Given the current increase in fuel and food, this is a

heavy hit. Striking is a last resort—the future of our pay, pensions and working conditions is at stake."

Another worker added, "Other universities are watching and if senior management beats us, they will try the same all over the country."

Bosses have shown determination to push ahead and impose the changes.

UCU members will need to continue their fight.

University workers boycott marking and assessments

STUDENTS AT Goldsmiths University in south London are occupying the library to hit back at bosses' plans to lay off workers. On Monday this week UCU union members started a boycott of marking and assessments.

Both the students and the workers are demanding that management rules out compulsory redundancies.

UCU member Marc told Socialist Worker the students are taking action because "the whole university is under attack".

■ **AT LONDON** Metropolitan University, UCU members are striking this week from Monday to Wednesday and are set to start a marking and assessment

boycott from next week.

University bosses are slashing the jobs of 120 of the workers.

■ Lobby the Department for Education. 1 May, 5pm, Orchard House, London, SW1P 3BT

■ **UCU MEMBERS** at the University of Edinburgh, are set to start a marking and assessment boycott on Friday.

Bosses have responded with a lockout—workers will lose all of their pay and will not be expected to carry out other duties.

The staff and students will need to be resilient and will need the full support of the union behind them, including donations and solidarity from other trade unionists.

University strikes rage on

■ **University of Aberdeen** UCU MEMBERS are on strike all this week against plans to slash jobs and courses.

■ **Southampton Solent University** STRIKES ARE set to continue this Thursday and the following Tuesday to Friday.

UCU members are in a bitter dispute over plans to fire and rehire workers which will remove access to the TPS pension scheme.

■ **University of Essex** WORKERS WALKED out

last Thursday and held a demonstration on Saturday in opposition to plans to close Southend campus and cut 400 jobs.

■ **University of Leicester**, STRIKES ARE planned on 5, 11 and 18 May.

■ **Cambridge University** WORKERS IN the Unite union walked out last Tuesday and Wednesday in a dispute over an imposed below inflation 1.4 percent pay award.

Strikes are set to continue on 30 April and 1 May.

SCHOOLS

>>>continued from page 16 elections in the Leyton ward of Waltham Forest. And on Friday of last week striking Transport for London workers from the RMT union paid a visit to their picket line.

Teachers and support workers in turn visited the RMT picket at Leyton Underground Station.

This solidarity is crucial, as schools in Waltham Forest face heavy cuts.

Since 2010-11, Waltham Forest schools have lost out on almost £50 million in funding.

At the same time, schools in the borough receive less funding than in neighbouring London boroughs due to the government's outdated and

unfair funding formula.

But it is not only workers at Connaught who are fighting back.

Balloting

There are a number of other schools currently balloting for strikes in May.

And this year alone has now seen 54 days of strikes in the borough.

Campaigners, trade unionists and supporters should continue to shower the picket lines in solidarity.

■ Send messages of support to Walthamforestbranch@neu.org.uk

■ Write to Tradewind Recruitment to call on them to stop scabbing on the strike at <https://bit.ly/stop-scabbing>

SUDAN

Stand against imperialism

PROTESTERS GATHERED in central London last Saturday to demand an end to the ongoing civil war in Sudan.

The protest was organised by the London for Sudan campaign group.

The war in Sudan is a power struggle between two rival militias that want to suppress the 2019 revolution.

But the atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces and the

Sudanese Armed Forces have been enabled by major and regional imperial powers.

People also gathered to protest against a new policy that limits migration for Sudanese students.

Some students due to start university this year have seen their offers withdrawn.

We all need to stand against British imperialism and the racist policies that accompany it.

Rimaz Ahmed



sends May Day greetings to all workers in Britain and the world fighting war, exploitation and oppression

Build a mass movement to end capitalism and imperialism!

May Day greetings from the Unite WM/6050 'Tom Mann' Coventry and Warwickshire Local Branch



WELFARE NOT WARFARE. SOLIDARITY WITH THE BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS!

MAY DAY GREETINGS ON INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY FROM UNITE BARTS HEALTH BRANCH ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1926 GENERAL STRIKE

- For jobs, for homes, for services, not racism!
- For working class unity against war, austerity and division!
- Renationalise and fund fully the NHS; kick out the profiteers for democratic public ownership of big pharma and the medical supply industries!
- For a fully funded restorative pay increase for all nhs workers!
- TUC implement its policy—for a national demo against Starmer's austerity offensive!
- Make the rich pay for the crisis not the 99%!

TEACHING ASSISTANTS DEMANDING FAIR PAY SAY

'WE KNOW THE MONEY IS THERE'

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs) at a north London primary school are taking the fight to bosses.

The Unison union members at Primrose Hill Primary School in Camden began four days of strikes on Tuesday over pay.

They are demanding to be regraded to get paid properly for the work they do.

They are essential workers, making sure children get all the support they need to learn. Yet they are among the lowest paid council workers, and are predominantly women.

One TA at the school told Socialist Worker that the workforce is at breaking point—and that strikes “have been a long time coming”.

“Some of us are working three, four jobs to get by,” she said.

“We’re not asking for much. It’s 23 pence an hour but it makes a difference. We’re the lowest paid workers at the school but we do so much.”

She added that teachers and parents have been supportive, taking stickers and signing the petition.

Value

“It shows the parents value us, can see what we do for their children and that they’re behind us,” she said.

The first day of picket lines was



TEACHING ASSISTANTS and their supporters on the picket line on Tuesday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

lively, with support from parents, other education union members and cars passing by. The TAs had solidarity visits from the Camden People’s Alliance, Camden NEU union and Camden Trades Council.

TAs at Richard Cobden Primary School, also in Camden, struck last year and this year over the same issue.

Another TA explained, “This issue around regrading is a problem going through the whole borough.”

“There’s a lot of one-to-one work and that takes a lot of planning. There’s a lot of children who have additional support needs too and require extra supervision.”

“The current pay doesn’t take all the work we do into account.”

One early years practitioner spoke to Socialist Worker, “I’m out in solidarity with my colleagues.”

“I’ve actually worked three jobs myself. If I’m doing that as someone on a higher scale, then how are my colleagues on a scale 3 expected to live on the pay they get.”

She blamed Labour for a spiralling cost of living crisis and

for choosing to implement austerity across local government.

“We’ve got a government that’s pushing the nation for more money for weapons but then giving nothing for local councils. So we know there is money there,” she said.

Liz Wheatley, the branch secretary for Camden Unison, said, “We’ve got a dispute about regrading all TAs across the borough to a grade that some of the schools and some London boroughs already pay. We believe Camden council should be paying it.”

“Workers at Richard Cobden school have won a rebalot to renew their strike mandate,” she said.

“We are looking into taking action together to make sure that we’re sending a really strong, clear message to both the council and the school senior management.”

“We know that there’s a funding crisis in schools. However, it’s always the people at the bottom of the pay scales who pay the price for that. It’s never the senior management, headteachers, executive heads, senior council officials who pay that price.”

“We believe, as well as the dispute here to pay TAs properly, that actually the council and the schools should be part of a campaign for increased funding for all schools.”

Join picket lines, Wed-Fri 7.30-9.15am, Primrose Hill Primary School, 40 Princess Rd, NW1 8JS

Strikers battle bosses and scabs at east London school

EDUCATION WORKERS at Connaught School for Girls in east London began their second week of strikes on Tuesday.

The NEU union members plan to stay out until 8 May over unfair managerial practices and workload.

They are also currently balloting for action over bosses’ plans for a “restructure” that attacks jobs and the union.

Union members feel under attack.

They believe that school management has specifically selected individuals for

redundancy.

Bosses have now ramped up those attacks. On Wednesday of last week the school began bringing in agency staff from Tradewind Recruitment to cover for workers out on strike.

Robin Talbot, assistant branch secretary of Waltham Forest NEU, slammed this move.

“It’s absolutely outrageous that this agency has been supplying staff to cover for workers out on strike. It’s also potentially unlawful,” he told Socialist Worker.

According to Acas—the



Solidarity visit from RMT members

government’s conciliation service—“Agencies must not provide workers to cover work that people taking part in lawful strike action would usually do.”

As of Tuesday, the school was still bringing in agency staff to cover striking workers.

But the workers are fighting back.

“Our members and supporters have launched a campaign to lobby the agency to make sure that they stop doing what they’re doing,” Robin added.

“And we demand a response from both school management

and the local authority as to how they let this happen in the first place.”

Despite attacks from the bosses, the workers have received widespread backing throughout the strike. They’ve received expressions of solidarity from NEU branches across London, including Brent, Ealing, Haringey, Lambeth and Lewisham.

They’ve also been visited on their picket line by Green Party and independent candidates standing in the upcoming local

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