

All out for Palestine and
THIS SATURDAY
against Tommy Robinson

Central London, 12 noon

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 3005 | 13 - 19 May 2026 | socialistworker.co.uk

AFTER AN ELECTION FROM HELL

ZOMBIE STARMER

and his party of the undead



Why Labour lost ● The fight against Reform UK ● Tests for Greens >>Pages 2&3

ANTI-RACISM

'Labour fuelling the far right'

LABOUR AND the mainstream media are fuelling the far right ahead of this Saturday's Nakba Day march.

They are boosting Reform UK and Nazi Tommy Robinson, who is marching on the same day.

Socialist Worker speaks to Islamophobia expert Syra Shakir and Jewish author David Rosenberg on Labour's authoritarian turn.

>>Page 4

HISTORY



Women who fought fascism

WOMEN MADE a huge contribution to anti-fascist organisations across occupied Europe. The deep sexism of fascist regimes meant women often attracted less suspicion than men.

Some joined military operations, others relayed guns and messages.

In Nazi-occupied France, women made up around 20 percent of those who joined the resistance.

>>Pages 8&9

FASCISM

Our enemy's changing face

Richard Donnelly is the author of 'We Are The Counter-Revolution'—Tommy Robinson and the Making of British Fascism. He spoke to Camilla Royle about far right ideology today.

>>Pages 10&11



THE THINGS
THEY SAY

'I said that we were going to rebuild after our worst defeat ever and we can see those signs of renewal everywhere'

Tory leader **Kemi Badenoch** leader after suffering a net loss of 563 seats, one of her party's worst ever election results

'We may as well hand in the keys to No. 10 now if we don't change our leader soon'

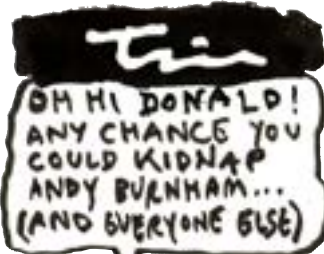
Labour's **Paulette Hamilton**, MP for Birmingham Erdington. On the city council, her party went from 65 seats to just 17

'The government chose to arm Israel and participate in genocide... (and it) chose to let the U.S. use British air bases for its war crimes in Iran'

Your Party's **Jeremy Corbyn** MP knows why Labour did so badly—and it wasn't its 'failure to communicate its message'

'I'm going to change the system'

Zoë Garbett, elected as Green Party mayor for Hackney, east London, overturning nearly 24 years of Labour 'owning' the position



WHAT NEXT AFTER LABOUR'S ELECTION DISASTER?

When Keir Starmer addressed his battered MPs this week, all he could offer was more of the same—but served with slightly more passion, writes **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

NATIONALISING A bankrupt company and putting Britain "at the heart of Europe."

That was Keir Starmer's plan to save his skin after the Labour Party was humiliated in the elections last week.

He vowed to prove his "doubters" wrong in a major speech in central London on Monday.

In a surprising development, it did not stop calls for his resignation ahead of a crunch cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Several ministers were demanding he set out a timeline for his departure.

It came after several MPs called for the prime minister to resign following Labour's loss of almost 1,500 councillors in England, while it won only nine seats in the Welsh parliament.

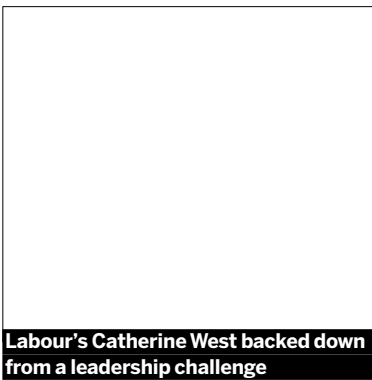
The rhetoric in Starmer's speech was a bit more passionate than usual.

But, in the end, he cast Labour as a defender of the "centre"—which has failed millions of working class people and fuelled the far right.

He said that there was a "battle for the soul" of Britain—and warned that the country was heading down a "very dark path".

That dark path, Starmer claimed, would end either with Zack Polanski's Green Party or Nigel Farage's Reform UK. "We cannot win the battle as a weaker version of Reform or the Greens," he said.

"We can only win as a stronger



Labour's Catherine West backed down from a leadership challenge

version of Labour, a mainstream party of power, not protest."

What is this stronger version of Labour?

First, Starmer promised to take "full ownership of British Steel" if the move passes a "public interest test."

Upsetting

But the Labour government took over the management of British Steel's plant in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, in April 2025.

Its parent company, China-based Jingye, had threatened to shut its blast furnaces with the loss of over 3,500 jobs. But Labour refused to nationalise the steel plant for fear of upsetting big business. Reform UK then outflanked it.

Farage went to Scunthorpe, posed alongside trade unionists and said a Reform UK government would have nationalised it.

An ardent fan of Margaret

Thatcher and the free market, Farage claimed nationalisation was justified in this case because "net zero" had caused the steel crisis.

In reality, privatisation and corporations have melted down the industry for profit.

Once again, Starmer allowed the far right to get away with posing as defenders of ordinary people.

Now it's too little, too late. And Labour still has no intention of keeping the steel industry in public ownership and running it as a public service as part of a green transition.

Second, Starmer said Labour would be "defined by rebuilding our relationship and by putting Britain at the heart of Europe."

This is how Starmer hopes to win back liberal and some left wing voters who've defected to the Green Party and Lib Dems.

The Greens' illusions in the



Starmer allowed the far right to pose as defenders of workers and ordinary people

Starmer is a prime minister of the undead

neoliberal EU are not what motivates people to back the party. It's Polanski's stance on Israel's genocide in Gaza, the principled defence of refugees and migrants and calls to tax the rich.

But these are policies that Labour refuses to adopt—in fact, it's made a point of taking a right wing position on these issues.

Inherit

The glaring omission in Starmer's speech was the cost of living crisis, which is accelerating amid Donald Trump's war on Iran.

Starmer is a prime minister of the undead—the problem for Labour is that very few want to replace him and inherit the crisis.

The Blairite health secretary Wes Streeting is rumoured to be preparing a bid for the leadership. But if the answer is Streeting, you aren't asking the right question—or perhaps any question.

He almost lost his seat to Palestinian activist Leanne Mohamad in the last general election.

The "soft left" wants Andy Burnham, the mayor of Greater Manchester who was blocked from



Special envoy Gordon Brown

standing in the Gorton and Denton by-election.

A leader with a more social democratic face would give some respite to Labour, but it wouldn't mark a fundamental shift from the politics of the Starmer government.

Burnham, for example, still supports Labour's self-imposed "fiscal rules" that see the government push austerity mark 2.

As Starmer spoke, the cost of borrowing on the bond markets rose. Fear not—Starmer has brought back Gordon Brown as a special envoy on global finance (see page 6). As chancellor during the New Labour years, Brown cosied up to the City of London in the run-up to the banking crash of 2007-08.

And just like Brown, Starmer will not break with the markets for fear of upsetting the bankers and bosses.

Instead, Zombie Labour is promising another reset that won't reverse its decline.

After brilliant election wins, now come tests for Greens

HOW WILL the Green Party resist the vast budget cuts that central government has imposed on all local authorities, including those it won control of last week?

Will it continue the Labour and Tory cuts—but make them with a kinder face? Or will the party decide to fight back and refuse to wield the axe against local jobs and services?

The Greens made a major breakthrough in England last week, winning five councils and two mayoralties.

The party positioned itself as a left wing alternative to the pro-war and pro-austerity politics of Labour.

Many newly elected Green councillors are torn over cuts.

It will take huge pressure from below for them to defy central government and pass an illegal "no cuts" budget.

But there are measures they can take now that could build that kind of radical resistance.

And local socialists must be part of putting pressure on them to defy Labour. Getting Green councillors to speak at picket lines and protests, for example, can be the start of this.

The party now has a majority on the council in Lewisham, in south London, where Liam Shrivastava is now mayor.

Local anti-racist activist Maggie says, "It's a massive



Greens celebrate winning in Hackney, east London, last week

swing against Labour. We've seen a seismic shift."

She adds that the Greens shifted to the left as the campaign went on. Shrivastava says he will explore twinning with a Palestinian town and has spoken out against racism, for example.

Pressure

"They haven't said they will propose a no-cuts budget," said Maggie. "They have talked about wanting to push back against the worst of them."

"But people here who voted for them do support a no-cuts budget. The pressure is on them to deliver."

In Haringey, 28 Green councillors were elected, just short of an overall majority.

Haringey Socialist Alliance (HSA) candidate Paul Burnham explained that the council is on

the verge of bankruptcy. But, he says, there are measures councillors could take—including opening up over 130 empty council houses.

"They should be lobbying government with the tenants alongside them," he says.

Alison Davy, who also stood as a candidate for the HSA, agrees.

"Making council-owned community centres available for community use is really important," she says. "That's been prevented by the previous Labour administration."

"But the big stuff is a no-cuts budget. That needs to happen."

Alison and other Haringey residents are planning to lobby the first council meeting.

They say having a presence outside the council chamber will help put pressure on the councillors inside.

Fight against Reform UK councils from day one

ANTI-RACISTS ARE preparing for battle with Reform UK-run councils across Britain.

Local elections last week saw the far right party take control of 14 councils, including Chelmsford, Havering, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Suffolk, Staffordshire and Thurrock.

In other councils, the far right party represents the largest single bloc. And across the country, there are now 1,454 Reform councillors.

In Wakefield, West Yorkshire, the local Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) campaign has mounted a speedy response to Reform UK winning nearly every seat in the town.

The party nearly had a clean sweep, winning 58 of 63 seats. The Lib Dems came in second, with two seats, while the Greens, Labour and Tories only managed one each. Labour lost 48 seats.

"There's definitely a feeling that we need to stand up to Reform, before they even start to run the council," says activist Laura.

She says the support so far is encouraging. The local trade union council has called a



Reform UK in South Tyneside—a really diverse bunch

meeting focussed on resisting Reform UK.

Laura says that at least half a dozen local union reps, including those in the GMB, NEU, RMT and Unite union, have pledged to be there.

And SUTR will be calling a protest against the incoming Reform administration next week.

There are already plans for more action. SUTR has called for a unity march in Wakefield on 18 July—and on the same evening, a Love Music Hate Racism gig.

"We've got a good foundation to build on," Laura said.

"Our arguments are hitting home. Now we have to hit back

against Reform," she added. Anti-racists are extremely aware of the threat posed by Reform UK.

On the eve of the elections, Nigel Farage pledged to lock up tens of thousands of migrants in detention centres—doubling down on his threat to bring Ice-style terror from the US to Britain.

That would no doubt lead to massive opposition in every major city, says Bob, an SUTR activist in Birmingham.

Labour there lost control of the council after 14 years in charge and now there is no overall control. It crashed from 51 to just 16 seats.

And Reform UK is now

the single largest bloc in the council, with 22 of its candidates elected. The Greens came in second with 19.

"Throughout the election, we handed out around 10,000 SUTR 'Vote against Farage' leaflets," says Bob. "We targeted two wards that were marginal, Reform UK won one, but not the other."

"During the campaign, we were able to contact others who wanted to resist Reform UK, including some of the Green and Independent candidates, who have now been elected."

"We're forming relationships where we can with these people," he said.

And, in Birmingham too, there are plans to protest against the incoming Reform UK councillors.

"There have been regular protests at the council chambers against cuts," says Bob.

"We've argued that the one on 19 May needs to take on the far right. SUTR will be there."

"And so will bin workers from the strikes that have only recently been wound down," he added.

Get in touch with Socialist Worker

@

Email reports@socialistworker.co.uk
Web www.socialistworker.co.uk
Facebook "Socialist Worker (Britain)"
Twitter @socialistworker

Newsdesk
020 7840 5656
Circulation
020 7840 5601

Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London
E16 9EJ



Expert says 'government rhetoric feeds Islamophobia and racism'

Labour is fuelling the far right and is increasingly authoritarian

LABOUR AND the mainstream media are fuelling the far right ahead of the Nakba Day march in London this Saturday.

They have weaponised the antisemitic attack in Golders Green in north London last month to smear Muslim people and the Palestine movement.

They're boosting Nazi Tommy Robinson, who is marching on the same day, and Reform UK.

Dr Syra Shakir, Associate Professor at Leeds Trinity University, researches the impact of Islamophobia and misogyny.

She told Socialist Worker, "This whole incident is being used to further suppress solidarity and freedom of speech around Palestine."

"Keir Starmer is equating Palestine activism to antisemitism and hatred towards Jewish people."

"But there are lots of Jewish people on the Palestine marches."

"The prevailing message is, if you stand against genocide, you are antisemitic."

"This is a conflation of anti-Zionism with being anti-Jewish. It assumes all Jewish people agree with Zionism and its ideology."

"It is about deleting Britain's role in supporting the genocide."

Mechanisms

"The government is creating tools and mechanisms to crush resistance and dissent and to maintain colonialism, imperialism and the war machine."

Syra added, "Islamophobia is getting worse—official statistics show a huge increase."

"There is also what I have called 'misogynislam'—the racialised targeting of Muslim women. Women identified as Muslim are increasingly subject to attack."

"Brown-skinned women are assumed to be Muslim, so are also targets."

"And women advocating for Muslim women and standing against Islamophobia are also subjected to horrific verbal abuse and threats."

"The far right uses the language of protecting women, but they

Dr Syra Shakir

perpetuate misogyny. They are very selective.

"Their claims of safeguarding co-exist with violence, surveillance and harassment of women who they assume to be Muslim."

"Incidents get reported on in ways that feed the government's rhetoric."

"Where are the voices of Jewish people, horrified by attacks in Golders Green, but who want to support Palestine?"

Eessa Suleiman was charged with the attempted murder.

He is the only suspect in the stabbing of two Jewish men in Golders Green and a Muslim man in south London.

Syra said that the story of the Muslim man who was attacked first "has been omitted from reporting".

"His life doesn't matter, the harm he has been subjected to is irrelevant," she said.

"This is selective reporting. People's ethnic and religious background is treated as more important than their health and well-being."

"Compare this reporting to another incident—in Liverpool in May 2025—when a man drove a car into a parade of football fans and caused serious harm."

"The driver's ethnicity, religion was not mentioned."

"His history was reported, how he had been in the military and had mental health challenges."

Saturday 16 May, Assemble at 12noon on Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2DB



DON'T LET the far right exploit antisemitism to push Islamophobia

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

'Antisemitism is growing—we need to challenge it with 16 May protest'

THE RIGHT wing media is posing as a defender of Jewish people in the wake of the antisemitic attack in Golders Green.

But the very same newspapers happily publish antisemitic cartoons.

Last week, The Times published an antisemitic cartoon of Green Party leader Zack Polanski, who speaks out against Israel's genocide.

Jewish socialist author and activist David Rosenberg spoke to Socialist Worker about rising antisemitism and the politicians exploiting it:

"Not one Labour cabinet member has condemned this cartoon. Keir Starmer has said nothing," said David.

"The establishment will use every trick in the book to do down Polanski. It is about the redistribution of wealth and power—this is what they feared with Jeremy Corbyn and now with the Greens."

"Antisemitism is growing. It lives in the place where it has always lived—in the British establishment, where it hasn't been challenged."

"The Times cartoon is an example of this. It is a horribly antisemitic cartoon. The cartoon carries coded messages—that

Polanski is alien, dangerous. This is classic antisemitism, but it is rare to see such a graphic example.

Orthodox

"Antisemitic sentiment is in the political sphere. It is on transport, on buses and planes."

"I was flying back from a Stand Up To Racism trip to Auschwitz concentration camp. On the plane, there was a British family and one of them had to sit next to an orthodox Jew."

"They were laughing at him, saying he had to sit near a 'front wheel skid'—which is rhyming slang for a 'yid'."

"Starmer doesn't give a monkey about antisemitism—he won't talk to Jews who are not right wing enough. It is terrible

that Starmer and Metropolitan police commissioner Mark Rowley are putting on the pressure to ban Palestine marches."

"We get over 1,000 Jewish people on the Jewish Bloc on Palestine demos."

"On marches, we get nothing but warmth and love and friendship. It is disgraceful to say they are antisemitic."

"On the 16 May Nakba Day march, Starmer is effectively siding with Tommy Robinson."

"They are trying to stop us and give space for a rally led by Robinson, a former British National Party member. He will raise an Israeli flag while taking about the antisemitic Great Replacement Theory."

"Starmer has very authoritarian politics. He is trying to advance the agenda of the British state, which is worried by any serious radical challenge."

"I hope the Greens will present a radical challenge. The person challenging Reform UK's agenda and racism—that's Polanski not Starmer. Starmer parrots the stop the boats stuff which just feeds support for Reform."

"Many Jews will be out marching on the 16 May—we are making a big effort to make sure we have a significant presence."

Three ways the cost of living crisis hits workers

by YURI PRASAD

WORKERS, PENSIONERS and unemployed people are already at the sharp end of a cost of living crisis. As Donald Trump's war on Iran drives up bills, even bosses think worse is yet to come.

A survey from accountancy firm PwC revealed this week that people are already slashing spending.

It recorded a consumer confidence score of minus 13, a sharp fall from minus 1 in January—and the lowest level since autumn 2023.

Here are three ways the bosses are trying to make us pay for their mess.

Food inflation

Food prices are set to be 50 percent higher this November than at the start of the cost of living crisis in 2021.

Pasta, frozen vegetables, chocolate and eggs were at least 50 percent more expensive than five years ago.

Household food bills are up by an average of £605 a year since 2022-3.

The Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) think tank, says, "Trump's war in the Middle East is set to drive shopping bills higher as oil and gas prices spike."

And climate change will make matters even worse.

"Scientists are predicting 2027 will be the hottest year on record, with climate change combining with the El Niño effect kicking in this year," says the ECIU. "Three of England's worst harvests on record have been in the past five years."

The El Niño effect warms the Pacific Ocean. It adds energy to weather systems and brings warmer weather.

Rising household bills

Latest predictions suggest energy bills could rise by up to 18 percent—

WORKERS WILL need to act quickly to organise a fightback

or £288 a year—by the summer.

The "energy price cap" is forecast to rise to £1,837 for a typical household.

That means we will be paying almost £900 a year more than before the crisis began.

At the same time energy companies are coining it in.

While the poorest watched their smart meters with growing dread, the giant firms made profits of over £26.2 billion in the first three months of 2026.

Equinor, Britain's biggest gas supplier, has squeezed £7.19 billion in profits out of us in so far this year.

Meanwhile, Shell made £5.05 billion in profits while seeking to reduce its tax bills by around £1.3 billion.

Falling wages

The government has whacked millions of public sector workers with below-inflation pay rises.

Hard-pressed NHS workers and those in the Department for Work and Pensions had a rise of just 3.5 percent imposed on them.

Local authority workers have been offered just 3.3 percent.

But inflation, as measured by RPI hit 4.1 percent last month. That's the measure used by banks, loan and credit card companies—and councils and housing associations setting rent rises.

The only way to stop this crisis destroying more lives is for the unions to act—and quickly.

There must be a generalised fightback over pay and benefits.

We need strikes this autumn.

Nurses pay price for lack of protection

CANCER NURSES are warning that they are being exposed to dangerous drugs with inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE), putting them at risk of miscarriage, infertility and other serious health problems.

An investigation by The Independent newspaper and Channel 4 News last week found that many NHS trusts push workers to handle hazardous medicines with little more than plastic aprons and gloves.

Nurses have described suffering repeated miscarriages alongside nausea, dizziness, fatigue and hair loss after years of working on cancer wards.

Cancer nurse Alison Simons said she fears her three miscarriages were linked to long-term exposure to the drugs. "When I was giving chemo, all we wore were plastic aprons and gloves to our wrists,"

she told the Independent.

The RCN union says current NHS guidance leaves trusts free to offer only the "bare minimum" protection.

Professor Karen Campbell, a former president of the UK Oncology Nurse Society, said her research showed that some 97 percent of nurses handling

these drugs were given only plastic aprons for protection.

The RCN is demanding stricter national standards and better protections for all healthcare workers handling toxic drugs. It says NHS employers have a legal duty to protect workers from hazardous substances, but that many trusts are failing to do so.

The scandal exposes the deadly consequences of an NHS run on the cheap. During the Covid-19 pandemic, nurses warned about inadequate PPE and unsafe working conditions. Now they say lessons were never learned.

The cost of proper protective equipment is tiny compared to NHS budgets, but workers' safety continues to come second to cutting costs and meeting targets.

Nurses are paying the price for years of underfunding and outsourcing.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

STARMER'S LONG LIST OF FAILURES

KEIR STARMER'S problem is not a lack of vision. It's that he has completely the wrong vision.

After the turbulent years of the Tories, the Labour Party and the media presented him as a boring, bureaucratic, technocratic alternative.

But nearly two years on, he is universally hated.

At every turn, Starmer has turned even the most ardent Labour supporters against him. From football stadiums to dart halls, everyone thinks "Keir Starmer is a wanker."

He kicked off his time in office by refusing to abolish the two-child benefit cap and kept 1.6 million children in poverty. He showed that the "moral case for socialism" he had promised in the run-up to the election was neither moral nor socialist.

The hits kept coming over the summer. The "summer blitz" of immigration raids fed an increasingly active far right and spread fear among migrants and black and brown people.

In the autumn, Labour scrapped the winter fuel payments. It left thousands of pensioners to make the "hard choice" between heating and eating while Starmer enjoyed free tickets at the Emirates stadium.

The prime minister then threw disabled people under the bus by slashing benefits with a promise to "stop benefit fraud". Then Labour picked trans women as its next target by backing the Supreme Court's transphobic ruling.

Next came Starmer's infamous "island of strangers" speech. In perhaps his most overt rightward turn, he peddled racist lies in the hope of looking "tough on immigration".

He has pushed unabashedly vile racism and banked on the false idea of a national identity to try to turn the tide against Nigel Farage's rise.

The next months were rocked by scandal after scandal in the party. Starmer's anti-corruption tsar was put on trial for corruption. Housing minister Angela Rayner was in hot water about a second home.

Peter Mandelson was sacked for his connections to paedophile Jeffrey Epstein and Starmer's right hand man Morgan McSweeney was forced to resign over the same.

You would think the former human rights lawyer would not side with and collaborate with a genocidal state that is shamelessly committing ethnic cleansing.

But before he was even elected, Starmer stated that Israel "has that right" to cut off water and electricity to Gaza and that it was not his place to say whether something is "genocide or not".

His loyalty to US imperialism has gone hand in hand with a crackdown in policing protests and free speech. The bastion of the British left for the past century is now overseeing one of the most authoritarian British governments ever.

The anger is palpable and the crisis of the Labour Party can be expected to spiral even further out of control. Whether it's his devotion to Zionism, his racism, his transphobia or his apparent hatred of the working class, it's no wonder Starmer's Labour suffered historic defeats in last week's elections.

At least we can say he's fulfilled his promise of "things getting worse before they get better."

★Fight Farage ★Resist Starmer

Join the
SWP



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Sinking Starmer grasps Brown's failed policies

EVERYONE KNOWS Keir Starmer is inept, unpleasant and right wing. It's symbolic that his first reaction to Labour's devastating defeat in the English local, and Scottish and Welsh elections was to appoint Gordon Brown and Harriet Harman as "special envoys".

Starmer turned to the two people who, as respectively party leader and deputy leader, presided over the defeat of the last Labour government in the 2010 general election.

Harman is a very longstanding New Labour timeserver.

She's summed up by the clip circulating on X that shows her raging at Jeremy Corbyn when he beat the official Labour candidate in Islington North in the 2024 election.

Brown is undeniably a more substantial figure.

With Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson, he was an original architect of New Labour. And as chancellor of the exchequer between 1997 and 2007, he sought to implement this project's promise of somehow reconciling neoliberalism and social democracy. This came down to appeasing the financial markets to get the space to implement extremely limited social reforms.

Brown started off sticking to the targets for taxation and spending laid down by the preceding Tory government of John Major. Only late in New Labour's first term did he open the spending tap somewhat, especially on the NHS.

Brown was lucky for much of his time at the Treasury. The British economy grew relatively quickly. This made it possible, for example, to fund the Sure Start programme aimed at supporting pre-school children and their parents.

But the growth was generated by two financial bubbles—in the stock market in the late 1990s and then in housing during the mid-2000s.

As the value of their assets rose, more affluent households felt wealthier and spent more. This boosted demand and employment. But the bubbles were fuelled by a debt explosion, often concealed through the creation of complex schemes in the City of London in Britain and on Wall Street in the US.

Bubbles

Brown fed the bubbles, boasting that the City was subject only to "light-touch" regulation. Retribution came in 2007-8 when the housing bubble burst and the credit dodges were exposed.

The collapse of the Wall Street bank Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008 sparked the biggest financial crash in nearly a century. By then Brown was prime minister, struggling to clean up the mess he had helped to create.

One of his worst decisions was to bring back the already disgraced Mandelson into government. From his correspondence with his crony, the sexual predator Jeffrey Epstein, Mandelson seems to have been more worried about advancing his personal interests than rescuing the economy.

In any case, Labour paid the political price for the crash.

The Conservative-Lib Dem coalition under David Cameron that replaced them butchered programmes like Sure Start. The economy has stagnated ever since.

How can Brown help Starmer now? This Labour government is still in the grip of the financial markets. Ever since Liz Truss's short-lived and disastrous premiership in autumn 2022, the market in gilts—British government debt—has loomed threateningly over Downing Street.

To balance the books with a weak economy, government borrowing has risen sharply. Gilts investors have reacted by demanding higher interest rates. These are now much higher than the interest on the government bonds of France and Italy, for example.

The City seems to be relying on chancellor Rachel Reeves to block any increase in government spending driven by pressure to move left.

Gilts dropped when there were rumours last year that she might resign. According to the Financial Times newspaper, "those close to Starmer admit he is not strong on economics". They say he has drafted Brown in to help work out how to bypass Reeves's opposition to higher defence spending.

This explanation simply confirms that Starmer is caught like a rat in a trap. What is destroying his government is the grim condition of British society and the pressure on living standards, not a shortage of tanks and drones.

The only way out of this trap would be to break out of Labour's subservience to the market. But Starmer won't hear that from Brown.

LETTERS

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

We oppose genocide, so we support Palestine Action

WE ARE among the several British-based law professors who signed a short letter addressed to the court of appeal. The letter reads, "We oppose genocide, we support Palestine Action."

Since we oppose genocide, we oppose the harsh treatment of the prisoners for Palestine and of the courageous hunger strikers.

We oppose the exceptionally cruel and unjustified periods of prolonged detention on remand that have kept the Filton and Brize Norton

defendants in prison without a conviction.

Restrictions

Since we oppose genocide and teach law, we oppose above all restrictions on one of the most fundamental principles of our entire judicial system and tradition.

That is the hard-won principle that jurors have the right to hear and evaluate the whole case and to acquit a defendant on the basis of their own independent judgment and conscience.

We oppose genocide,

and like so many thousands of our fellow citizens, over the past couple of years we have expressed our opposition to it in a number of ways.

By writing to our MPs and professional bodies, by marching in the streets and by engaging in a wide range of campaigning work. But the genocide continues, with the active collusion of our government—while we all remain solemnly obliged to prevent it.

We oppose genocide, and therefore we support whatever non-violent

action might be required to stop it and to shut down the British-based weapons manufacturers—like Elbit Systems—that are helping to enable it. We oppose genocide, therefore we support Palestine Action.

Simon Behrman, Neve Gordon, Penny Green, Sarah Keenan, Hans Lindahl, Yvette Russell, David Whyte, Peter Hallward,

The full version of this open letter was sent to the home secretary, the attorney general and the chief justice of England and Wales.

The full version, published on 3 May by the ISCI and Communis, can be found at tinyurl.com/lawyersoppose

May Day in Minnesota

I WAS on the demonstration in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May Day.

Thousands of workers and trade unionists marched on the first May Day since Donald Trump sent thousands of Ice agents to Minnesota.

There were banners from the SEIU union and the teachers' unions, as well as the immigrant rights organisation Mirac.

An activist spoke about how she stopped an Ice abduction and is now facing charges for interfering with law enforcement.

It wasn't just one march. In the morning I went to two different picket lines. I went to the one at the Hotel Ivy and spoke to one of the hotel workers.

She told me the strike had really upset the bosses. The room service workers walked out and were outside banging drums on the picket line.

There is also a May Day parade in a park every year. It is not a political event but socialist organisations go and hold stalls.

There were anti-Ice signs and signs about helping our neighbours.

I feel like "help your neighbours" shouldn't be a political statement, but at this point it is.

Leo
Minneapolis, Minnesota



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Compulsory voter ID attacks our democracy

I'M REALLY shocked and concerned about the new rules brought in making it compulsory for voters to bring photo ID.

The main argument behind it is driven by racist lies that there are "illegals" voting and getting the left in. But there is no evidence of voter fraud.

According to the Electoral Commission, Britain has "low levels" of electoral fraud.

What does it mean for the two million people who currently lack the accepted forms of identification?

This is a deliberate

attempt to exclude poorer people from voting, because if you're poorer you're less likely to have valid ID.

I've witnessed this first hand when I've been canvassing. If you are poorer there are already barriers preventing the likelihood of you voting.

Now this is a further barrier to exclude vulnerable people.

It is an attack on democracy designed to exclude people who are most likely to vote against austerity.

Mica Evans
Candidate for the Ealing Community Independents

All at sea after Covid

FOR MANY, the hantavirus outbreak has brought back unpleasant memories from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Three passengers on a cruise ship have died already.

The World Health Organization has taken great lengths to say "This is not Covid" and that hantavirus "spreads very, very differently."

But after the monumental mishandling of Covid-19, with hundreds of thousands of deaths in Britain alone, can we really trust these authorities?

Faye Young
Liverpool

Disaster for the left—why did Modi win in elections across India?

Narendra Modi's hard right BJP party ramped up Islamophobia, but the left is also to blame, writes Yuri Prasad

INDIA'S STATE-WIDE elections last week were a disaster for the left.

Some 154 million people across four states and one territory voted in April.

The results saw Narendra Modi's hard right BJP party sweep all before it. Not only did it return to office in Assam, but it also smashed the opposition in West Bengal—once the jewel in the crown of the Indian left.

Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal since 2011—a liberal secularist and fierce opponent of Modi—even lost her seat.

With ample justification, Banerjee accuses Modi of rigging the polls by using India's electoral commission to wipe millions of voters—most of them Muslim—from electoral rolls.

The Congress party, once the traditional party of government across India, also had a tough election. It now runs just four out of India's 28 states, while 21 are controlled by Modi's allies.

The one consolation for Congress came in Kerala, where the Left Front of the two main communist parties had been in power for a decade.

Here, Congress's UDF alliance won 102 seats to the Left Front's 35 seats. Worryingly, the BJP's NDA grouping captured three seats for the first time in what had been India's most resolutely secular state.

The left's loss of Kerala means that—for the first time since 1977—communists do not run a single state in India.

Results

Modi is now at the helm of an India in which his opponents hold virtually no parliamentary or state political power.

While it is true that the right manipulated the electoral roll, that alone cannot explain the scale of its victory—especially in the light of Modi's poor showing in India's 2024 election. Then, the BJP was humiliated by losing its outright parliamentary majority.

There is some evidence that, in

the wake of the election, the right decided to double down on its anti-Muslim hate. The US-based research group India Hate Lab reports that hate speech against minorities jumped by 74 percent in 2024.

Muslims were targeted most, with 98.5 percent of recorded instances directed at them. Modi regularly refers to Muslims as “infiltrators”.

Twist

Muslims have lived in what is now modern India for centuries. However, in a South Asian twist of the far right “Great Replacement Theory”, Modi says there is a conspiracy to displace India's Hindu population.

In West Bengal, the BJP made a significant effort to present itself as the party of Hindu interests, contrasting itself with Banerjee, who they described as only caring about her Muslim voters.

India's left must accept its share of the blame for the right's success.

Mass struggles, including those of farmers and striking workers, have offered a chance for radical politics to overcome communal division.

In 2020-21 and again in 2024, farmers protesting against free market agricultural reforms led massive rebellions against the state.

And unions organised mass strikes involving between 200 and 300 million workers in 2020, 2025 and 2026.

But the main left parties never took seriously the possibility of combining a prolonged mass strike with the farmers' rebellions.

The left's record in states where it had political control was one of compromise with big business and of seeking investment deals with multinational firms.

The record of left state governments alienated many poor voters, making the communists appear as “just another party” and leaving them vulnerable to the right's Islamophobia.

The left's revival relies on whether it can relearn the traditions that made it a force in India in the 1970s.

SUPPORTERS OF India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) celebrating in West Bengal

Historic strike hits the Venice Biennale

by PAT MEUSEL

SOLIDARITY WITH Palestine took centre stage at the Biennale international art exhibition in Venice, Italy.

A group of activists, artists and art workers in the Art Not Genocide Alliance (Anga) took action last week.

They had delivered a letter on 17 March demanding Israel's exclusion from the exhibition. Although the letter had 236 signatories, Anga received no response. They decided to escalate.

Anga disrupted the opening day of the Biennale on Wednesday of last week with direct action in solidarity with Palestine.

On 8 May, Anga escalated further, calling a 24-hour strike of workers in the cultural sector in Venice—the first time strikes have been called during the Biennale.

The historic strike was called alongside local and national grassroots organisations but also the organised trade union movement. The Associazione Difesa Lavoratori (ADL Cobas), Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) and Confederazione Unitaria di Base (CUB) unions all supported the action.

A total of 26 national pavilions chose to participate, and shut for the day.

As the one-day strike drew to

a close, some 3,000 people came together to join a protest.

Sara, a curator based in Ireland, told Socialist Worker, “I feel like events of the last few weeks have exposed the Biennale, and by extension, the art world and its complicity.”

Posing

“All this while a literal genocide is being committed—and all the while posing as an egalitarian United Nations of Art,” she added.

Ahmet Ogut, a Kurdish artist based in Amsterdam, said the escalating actions marked a turning point.

“The strike and protest organised by Anga and Italian cultural workers in solidarity with Palestine shows that the

Biennale Foundation cannot continue with business as usual,” he told Socialist Worker.

“It cannot continue to include countries whose leaders are currently charged with crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court.

“Institutions like the Biennale no longer lead the way. Sooner or later they will have to learn from the people,” he argued.

The strike was called under the slogan “Blocchiamo tutto”, “Let's block everything!”

This is the inspiring call that dockworkers in Genoa issued when they disrupted the shipment of arms to Israel.

Workers in all sectors need to continue these sorts of actions. And to escalate them.

Thousands protest against Israel's inclusion in the Venice Biennale

ON THE night of 12 March 1945, a gang of fascists entered a modest home in the suburbs of Turin, in northern Italy. They kidnapped three women, 19 year old Vera Arduino, her 16 year old sister Libera and their friend, 24 year old Rosa Ghizzone, who was heavily pregnant.

They were driven to the Pellerina Canal, lined up and shot.

Vera, Libera and Rosa were among the thousands of “stafetta,” women who worked for the anti-fascist resistance, carrying messages, transporting weapons and guiding men to safety in the mountains.

The women of the district turned their funeral into a protest against fascism. On the morning of 16 March, more than 2,000 women arrived at the cemetery, wearing red jumpers and carrying red flowers and placards denouncing fascist brutality.

Benito Mussolini’s crack anti-partisan unit arrived firing guns into the air and driving the protesters into trucks to be taken to prison camps.

But when the hearses arrived, the women knelt and began to sing resistance songs.

Throughout Turin, workers staged a 15-minute strike in solidarity.

This was the first anti-fascist protest led by women, for women, in Italy.

Mussolini had been overthrown in a coup two years earlier, in 1943. The moment of euphoria and liberation that followed was swiftly extinguished when Adolf Hitler’s troops occupied northern Italy.

The Nazis re-installed Mussolini as a puppet president in the north. The Allies did little to challenge the Nazi occupation, fearing that the resistance was full of reds and dismissing Italians as untrustworthy.

Occupied

During those two years, thousands of women throughout occupied Italy rose up. They joined the resistance and fought to liberate their country, writes Caroline Moorehead in her brilliant book, *A House in the Mountains*.

For two decades Mussolini had turned women into shadows without rights or a voice.

The fascists forced women out of their jobs, launched “crusades for purity” and passed a deluge of orders decreeing that they could earn nothing, learn nothing and decide nothing.

The Vatican encouraged “crusades for purity”, demanding that girls’ physical education lessons be exchanged for “motherhood” classes.

But the women fought back, risking arrest, torture, rape and execution. They joined partisan units, created socialist resistance groups and joined the Italian Communist Party.

Ada Gobetti founded the left wing Party D’Azione and became political commissar for a partisan brigade. Communist Bianca Guidetti Serra ran anti-fascist action committees in the factories of Turin and produced an underground paper for women.

The women of the Italian Resistance did not simply want to rid Italy of fascists and Nazis. They wanted to replace them with a genuinely democratic and equal society.

But when the Allies effectively took over running Italy in the summer of 1945, the women were to be sorely disappointed.

The Allies did not care about equality or justice—they cared only about



(top) **The corpses of Mussolini his mistress Clara Petacci and other fascist associates hanging by their feet in the Piazzale Loreto, Milan, after being shot by communist partisans (above) Sisters Vera and Libera Arduino were murdered by fascists in 1945**

restoring order. It meant compromising with elements of the old fascist regime to crush the Communists and the workers’ movement.

The new Christian Democrat government, elected in 1946, declared an amnesty for all crimes committed by both fascists and resistance fighters before 25 April 1945, when fascism fell.

That meant the reprisals against fascist spies and collaborators would be treated as murder.

Thousands of partisans were persecuted and arrested and many spent years in jail for the “crime” of fighting fascism.

But they could not erase the memory of collective resistance. As one Italian woman commented, “We were conscious that for the first time we had been players in history.”



Women that joined the partisans and fought back risked arrest, torture, rape and execution

‘People that oppress others can never be a free people’

WOMEN MADE a huge contribution to anti-fascist organisations across occupied Europe. The deep sexism of fascist regimes meant women often attracted less suspicion than men.

In France Ruth “Malou” Altmann, who spoke fluent German, reported on German conversations overheard on trains, in bistros and on the streets. Travelling by bike, with her three year old daughter, she went unnoticed and avoided suspicion.

Some women joined military operations. In Nazi-occupied France, women made up around 20 percent of those who joined the resistance.

A photograph of 18 year old Simone Segouin carrying a submachine gun (photo, right) captured from the Nazis in 1944 in the French city of Chartres became a symbol of women’s courage.

Some women turned to socialist politics. Student midwife Madeleine Riffaud was also 18 when she joined a partisan group aligned to the Communist Party.

She was furious at being ordered to carry guns across Paris for men. Riffaud demanded her own gun, which she used to shoot a German officer. She was caught, tortured, released in a prisoner exchange—and returned immediately to the struggle.

Riffaud led a unit that trapped a train carrying munitions and secured the surrender of 80 German troops.



Judy Cox on the hidden history of how women organised and risked their lives to fight back as fascism spread across Europe

After the war, she was not allowed to join the regular French Army because she did not have her father’s permission.

Riffaud would later report for the French Communist paper, *L’Humanité*, on struggles against French colonialism in Algeria and Vietnam.

“A people who oppress another,” she wrote, “can never be a free people”.

Despite enormous risks, German women found ways to resist Hitler. Some hid Jewish refugees. Others circulated anti-Nazi propaganda.

Sophie Scholl, a primary school teacher, and her brother Hans set up the White Rose Group in 1942.

They were arrested after dropping flyers at a Munich university. Convicted of high treason, Sophie was executed on 22 February 1943. She was aged just 21.

In the same month as her execution, women in Berlin’s

Rosenstrasse staged the only public protest against the deportations of Jewish people.

Non-Jewish women demanded the release of their Jewish husbands who had been rounded up for deportations to concentration camps. They kept up their protests for a week. When the Gestapo



Despite enormous risks, women found ways to resist Hitler and the Nazis in Germany

threatened to machine-gun them, they dispersed, but only to regroup.

The women of Rosenstrasse got nearly 2,000 men released.

Other German women fought fascism from exile. Dora Schaul, a Jewish woman, escaped Germany in 1933 and lived in Paris where she was interned as an enemy alien.

Schaul escaped from internment in 1942 just before she was deported and joined the French resistance in Lyon. Her fluent German meant she landed a job as a postal worker which enabled her to pass Gestapo plans to the French partisans.

Her parents and sister, who had stayed in Germany, were murdered in the concentration camps. But Dora survived and fought back.

Even in the darkest of times, women found ways to light sparks of resistance.

Dora Schaul, a German Jewish resistance fighter

(left) **Anti-fascist women with rifles in Milan** (above) **Police arrest a woman fighting to stop a fascist march in Cable Street, east London in 1936**

Hitting back in Britain

THE INCREDIBLE role women played in the resistance to the Nazi occupation was possible because they had already been at the forefront of fighting fascism.

German revolutionary Clara Zetkin made a crucial contribution to the development of a Marxist understanding of fascism.

Zetkin argued that fascism was a counter-revolutionary movement that used extreme violence to crush the left and the labour movement.

A range of anti-fascist women’s organisations emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. Women were excluded from formal politics, but they built popular support through campaigns, conferences, committees and lectures.

They often sneaked into fascist meetings to heckle and unveil anti-fascist banners—a tactic borrowed from the women’s suffrage movement.

Suffrage campaigner and revolutionary Sylvia Pankhurst was one of the first to recognise the threat Mussolini posed.

She addressed her first anti-fascist rally in London’s Trafalgar Square in March 1923, just months after Mussolini seized power. Mussolini—an ally of the British at that time—complained to the British foreign office about Pankhurst.

Fascism aimed to turn Aryan women into incubators of the master race and to persecute racialised women. And it threatened the rights they had won through the long, hard campaigns.

Women’s anti-fascist organising was also shaped by wider political developments.

In the early 1920s, the Communist Parties of Europe were the backbone of many anti-fascist groups.

By the late 1920s, however, Stalin had consolidated his power in the Soviet Union. He imposed the idea that Labour-type parties were “social fascists”.

Communists isolated themselves from millions of workers who wanted a united fight against fascism.

Revulsion against Hitler’s seizure of



Fascists aimed to turn Aryan women into incubators of the master race

power in 1933 forced the Communist parties to alter course. They swerved towards creating alliances with moderate parties in a popular front.

In August 1934, over 1,000 women from 28 countries gathered in Paris to establish the Women’s World Committee Against War and Fascism (CMF).

Campaigner

Many of those involved were Communists, but others came from feminist and anti-war organisations.

CMF activists included Sylvia Pankhurst, the Spanish Communist Dolores Ibarruri and French peace campaigner Gabrielle Duchene.

The first CMF congress in Paris in 1934 heard speeches about women’s collective power to challenge fascism.

But the second congress held in Marseille four years later retreated into talk of strengthening legal protection against a fascist takeover.

The popular front strategy depended on curbing militant women in order not to alienate moderate organisations. But the Nazis cared nothing for rules and regulations or moderate appeals.

The huge potential for a united fight against fascism was squandered in Germany and France—but there were moments when unity won through.

One of those came in Britain in October 1936.

While Communist and Labour leaders refused to unite against fascism, the communities threatened by Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists understood that unity was essential.

Significant numbers of Jewish and anti-fascist women were among the estimated 100,000 who gathered at Cable Street in London’s East End to stop Mosley.

They threw up barricades across the street. Women threw milk bottles and refuse onto the police as they defended the Blackshirts.

Women were also in the street, fighting alongside the men.

One of them was Communist and strike leader Sarah Wesker. Her lover Mick Mindel later recalled, “At the time of the Cable Street battle, she was a real inspiration to all of us.”

Another was Blanche Edwards who was photographed being arrested.

Jack Shaw remembered seeing a young woman in the police station after they had both been arrested. He saw a huge policeman grab the woman, rip off her blouse and hold his truncheon as if to strike her in the face. She stared straight at him and said, “I am not afraid of you”.

At Cable Street, fear changed sides. It was the Blackshirts and the cops who got a beating. Mosley’s Blackshirts did not pass.

Why do you call Tommy Robinson a fascist?

FASCISM HAS always been ideologically adaptive. It's something that changes over time and it never creates its own ideology out of nowhere.

It's always a parasitic ideology. And that means that in different contexts, fascism has taken different ideological forms. Nazism was in some ways very different to Italian fascism.

So the presence or absence of swastikas isn't a deciding factor over whether an organisation is fascist or not. What makes it fascist is that it's a movement from below of reactionary parts of the population who are trying to build a street movement.

And they're doing this to physically attack the left, migrants and Muslims. That's precisely what Robinson is doing.

There's a reason he's called a demonstration on Saturday 16 May—when there is a Palestine protest for Nakba Day. He is trying to go up against the Palestine movement.

Over the past two and a half years, he's emerged as a street leader of the fascist movement. He's done this by positioning himself as the person who can lead the physical force needed to put the Palestine movement back into the box.

His aim is often to violently harass the Palestine movement. That sits within his broader history of attempting to mobilise on the streets against progressive movements.

It's why he mobilised for the so-called defence of statues during the Black Lives Matter movement.

So, for the Palestine movement, I think it's a question of self-defence and it's an existential question. Are you going to stand up and protect the movement against people who want to physically force it off the streets?

The 16 May is an important crystallisation of a lot of the stuff that's going on in Britain today.

There's also the question of the way the state is acting.

Police have allowed fascists to have Trafalgar Square and Whitehall, while at the same time cracking down on the Palestine movement, cracking down on the ability to even assemble in various parts of London.

Why do you think Robinson embraces Zionism?

I THINK he's attracted to Zionism for opportunistic reasons. Essentially, he believes that if he wraps himself in



ANTI-IMMIGRATION PROTEST called by Tommy Robinson last September was the biggest in British history

THE CHANGING FACES OF FASCISM IN BRITAIN TODAY

Richard Donnelly is the author of 'We Are The Counter-Revolution'—Tommy Robinson and the Making of British Fascism. He spoke to Camilla Royle about far right ideology today

Tommy Robinson

an Israeli flag, then it means that people won't be able to accuse him of antisemitism.

Of course, Zionism and antisemitism are compatible. Some of the historical and present-day leaders of the Zionist movement, often they are led by antisemitic people.

Pastor John Hagee, for example, in the US, the leader of Christians United For Israel, is extremely antisemitic, but also a supporter of Zionism.

The value of strategic Zionism, for Robinson, is deniability.



The 16 May is a really important crystallisation of a lot of the stuff that's going on in Britain

He emerges from this fascist tradition in British politics. He was a member of the British National Party (BNP).

But he has sought, since he left the BNP in the 2000s, to try and distance himself from that tradition.

He does it in a really clichéd way, by literally saying "I have black friends, so how could I possibly be racist?"

He does it by claiming that he's a defender of liberalism against Muslims and against Islamism.

And he does it by claiming that he's a firm supporter of the state of Israel, which means he couldn't possibly be an antisemite or a neo-Nazi.

The other part of it is that all the time he's trying to position himself as a node within this international far right network.

That's why he's been in the US positioning himself as the person through which the money and political influence can run.

And of course Israel is a society dominated by the far right. It has a far right government, it has quite a few established far right parties and they're an important part of that network.

Do you think there's a possibility of the right going into electoral parties like Reform UK and Restore Britain and trying to build there?

ROBINSON HAS always had a focus on building a physical street force that is capable of dominating the streets and intimidating its political opponents as well as migrants and Muslims.

But he has taken an interest in developing an electoral vehicle as well.

They have usually not been successful. They started with the British Freedom Party, that was a group of people who had been in the BNP mostly, but attempted to become a sort of electoral vehicle for the EDL in the early 2000s.

He sent many of his supporters into Ukip to infiltrate, to be part of the leadership. He's now pulled out of that and he's thrown his lot in with Advance UK, the party founded by Ben Habib, former deputy leader of Reform UK.

But the problem for him in terms of building a political party as a vehicle for his movement, is the level of is demoralisation and fragmentation inside the far right.

What is causing this fragmentation?

IT HAS partly arisen out of the fact that in local areas they have actually been pushed back by anti-racists.

But there are also huge strategic and ideological debates within the far right about what sort of organisation and what sort of ideology it should have.

They discuss it in terms of civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism.

Civic nationalism is the strategy represented by Reform UK and Robinson himself. It says, "We're not biological racists—we're against people who come from different cultures and won't integrate into British society."

Obviously it's actually about skin colour. The people they are talking about are always black and Asian people.

On the other side there's the ethno-nationalists who include neo-Nazis and people who preach ideas about biological race.

There's been a touchstone debate among these people about whether a black anchorperson on GB News can regard herself as British or not.

The civic nationalists say that she can. The others say that she couldn't possibly be British because she's a black person.

That debate points to a fragmentation within the far right, that has now crystallised into two separate organisations.

Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain becoming a magnet for the ethno-nationalists.

It has support from the network of activists who recently left Homeland, which is a neo-Nazi party that comes out of the BNP. It has attracted support from Mark Collett, who's an open neo-Nazi in Patriotic Alternative.

Then, on the other hand, this sort of civic nationalist milieu, which is tied up with Robinson. The fragmentation means that Advance UK is going nowhere. However, Restore Britain is looking more dynamic.

One poll predicted that it would take 9 percent of the vote in the 7 May elections. I don't believe that 9 percent of the population knows what Restore Britain is, but they've taken that as meaning they are a challenge to Reform UK.

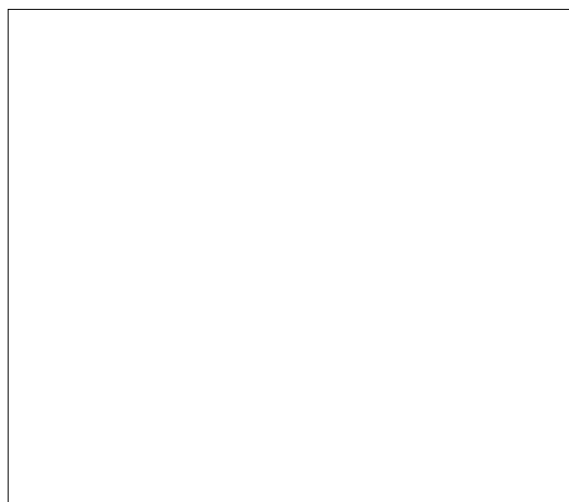
This was never really going to happen. But it does underline the fragmentation that's taking place.

What are the tensions between Reform UK and Robinson?

THE ANTI-RACIST movement has put this wedge into Reform UK, where we've said you cannot work with Robinson because he's a fascist.

Nigel Farage has been trying to create a respectable party with a front bench of ex-Tories that's going to be a good guardian of the British state.

He's consistently said that he won't share platforms with Robinson, he won't let him into Reform UK. That has created big tensions between the most extreme parts of the Reform UK base and the leadership. This



Ben Habib of Advance UK (top) Restore Britain is a far right party trying to outflank Reform UK (above)

is the background to why Lowe left the party.

But since he left, there's also been a fragmentation. This is over Robinson and Lowe's ability to exist in the same organisation because of the influence of antisemitism and neo-Nazis in the movement.

Restore Britain is worrying, but the fragmentation of the far right is really good for us.

The Together alliance demonstration on 28 March shows that our side can be really strong, particularly when the anti-racist movement and the anti-imperialist movement come together.

Tens of thousands of people were joining the dots between the struggle against the far right, Reform UK and racism.

If we have a fraction of the people who went on that demonstration in central London on 16 May, it could be a really important day for us to push back Robinson.

If his supporters don't feel able to attack us, don't feel confident, then all of those questions around the fragmentation of their side are going to come home to roost for Robinson.

READ MORE

● **'We are the counter-revolution'—Tommy Robinson and the remaking of British fascism**
by Richard Donnelly, in International Socialism Journal 190, £6

● **A Radical Guide to Anti-Fascism**

by Lewis Nielson and Samira Ali, £3

● **The Anatomy of Fascism**
by Robert O. Paxton
£12.99

All books available at Bookmarks bookshop. co.uk



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM
with Judy Cox

Could the working class really run society for itself?

THE SYSTEM is driving us to disaster. But can we be confident the working class could do better?

Any new society will emerge from the changes that flow from mass struggle.

In past revolutions, workers created new institutions based on forms of direct democracy. In some, they were able to wrest production from the bosses and start to run it themselves.

Is this possible in today's complex, high-tech economies?

Apologists for capitalism argue that only the free market can register what people want and allow companies to meet demand.

But the market means production is shaped by the demands of the rich. And bosses compete to manipulate us with advertising.

The free market is irrational, chaotic and profoundly unfree. Workers produce commodities they will never enjoy.

Capitalist production already depends on high levels of meticulous planning that allows goods to be transported around the world.

But planning is locked into competition which leads to disastrous economic and environmental crises. And corporations must plan for a future market they cannot predict.

Coordination

In a democratically planned society, we can develop the planning mechanisms that exist now—but liberate them from the bosses.

We can decide collectively how our social needs are met. Coordination and cooperation will replace competition. It is workers who really know how to run things, not bosses.

In capitalism, technology boosts efficiencies, but threatens jobs. In a socialist society, there would be every incentive to produce as efficiently as possible.

Some forms of planning can be "top-down." Governments take over sectors of the economy that are too big to fail—but state

WORKERS DEBATING during the Russian Revolution

ownership is very different from democratic control.

Truly democratic planning depends on workers being able to decide what is produced, how resources are used and how technologies are developed.

Democratic planning is the only way we can resolve the deepening climate crisis.

A socialist society would create new forms of economic and ecological cooperation, connecting local areas with whole regions.

Cooperation means the sharing of scientific, medical and technological knowledge which are today used as weapons in commercial war.

It is easy to envisage rapid decarbonisation and a transition to green energy being the priorities of a planned economy.

A socialist society would have no need to spend billions on war, fast fashion or advertising. We could phase out harmful practices like private car ownership.

Capacities and resources could shift to support health, public transport, farming and the care sectors.

Priorities would be



Workers would decide on priorities through debate

established through debates that would put human interests at the centre of decision making.

Friedrich Engels explained, "In making itself the master of all the means of production to use them in accordance with a social plan, society puts an end to the former subjection of men to their own means of production, the marketplace."

Imagine expropriating networks like Amazon. It has an incredibly efficient distribution system. But it depends on exploitation, climate catastrophe and ever-expanding consumer "needs".

Debate

Yet Amazon provides a glimpse of the technologies that could be harnessed to support global planning, communication, shared learning and innovation.

Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky argued that in a socialist society, there would be huge debates over questions like the distribution of oases in the Sahara desert, regulation of the weather, over chemical hypotheses and different tendencies in music and sport.

Karl Marx believed that socialism would allow workers to develop the capacities crushed under capitalism—including the ability to consciously plan and coordinate what they produce. Marx saw the ability to plan as a "slumbering power." We all have that power, but we need a social transformation to exercise it together.

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

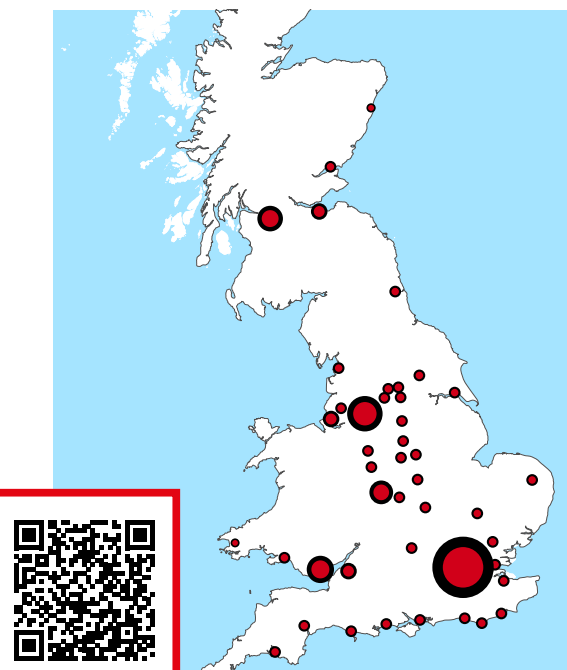
- Plymouth and Cornwall
- Portsmouth

East and south east

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

Wales

- Cardiff
- Swansea
- West Wales



MARXISM 2026

2-5 JULY, LONDON

HOSTED BY **THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST LEFT WING FESTIVAL

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

YANIS ●●●●●
VAROUFAKIS

● **GARY ♦ YOUNGE**

ZARAH ♦ SULTANA

RICHARD ★ BOYD
♦♦ BARRETT ♦♦♦♦♦

JEREMY ▲▲▲▲▲
▲▲ CORBYN ▲▲▲▲▲

● **JODI ★ DEAN ●**

SHAHED ♦♦ EZAYDI

TARIQ ● ALI ●
ILAN ★ PAPPE

ANDREW ▲▲▲▲▲
▲▲ FEINSTEIN ▲▲▲▲▲

● **REBECCA ●●**
★ JANE ♦ MORGAN

★ **MV ▲ RAMANA**

MICHAEL ♦♦♦♦♦
● ROBERTS ●

▲ **SAMIRA ● ALI ♦**

JOHN ♦ BELLAMY
▲▲▲ FOSTER ▲▲▲▲▲

JAMES ♦ MEADWAY

ALYSSA ●●●●●
● BATTISTONI ♦♦

EARLY BIRD TICKETS: BOOK BY 17 APRIL

TINYURL.COM/MARXFEST26



BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



Revolutions Thwarted: Poland, South Africa, Iran, Brazil
by John Rose, £12



Revisiting the General Strike of 1926
by Charlie Kimber and Judy Cox, £11



Palestine, Imperialism, and the Struggle for Freedom
by Philip Marfleet, £10



Breaking Our Chains: Women, Marxism and the Path to Liberation
by Sally Campbell, Sarah Bates and Judy Cox, £10



A People's History of the Anti-Nazi League
by Geoff Brown, £12

PHONE 020 7637 1848 WEB bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

A damning indictment of the brutality of Stalin's show trials

by YURI PRASAD

SOME OF the most frightening films are not based on the depiction of actual violence or gory special effects. Instead, they work by referencing our fears about the world around us now—and what it might become.

So it is with *Two Prosecutors*, a Russian language period drama set amid the 1937 show trials in Joseph Stalin's Russia.

The film opens with guards in a Soviet prison in the city of Bryansk ordering an elderly inmate to burn sacks of prisoners' appeal letters.

One is from an "old Bolshevik from before the revolution." He appeals to "Comrade Stalin" to come to his aid after the NKVD secret police fitted him up as a supporter of the "Trotsky-Zinoviev faction."

Another catches the inmate's eye. It is written in blood by a prisoner called Stepniak and it demands redress for false imprisonment.

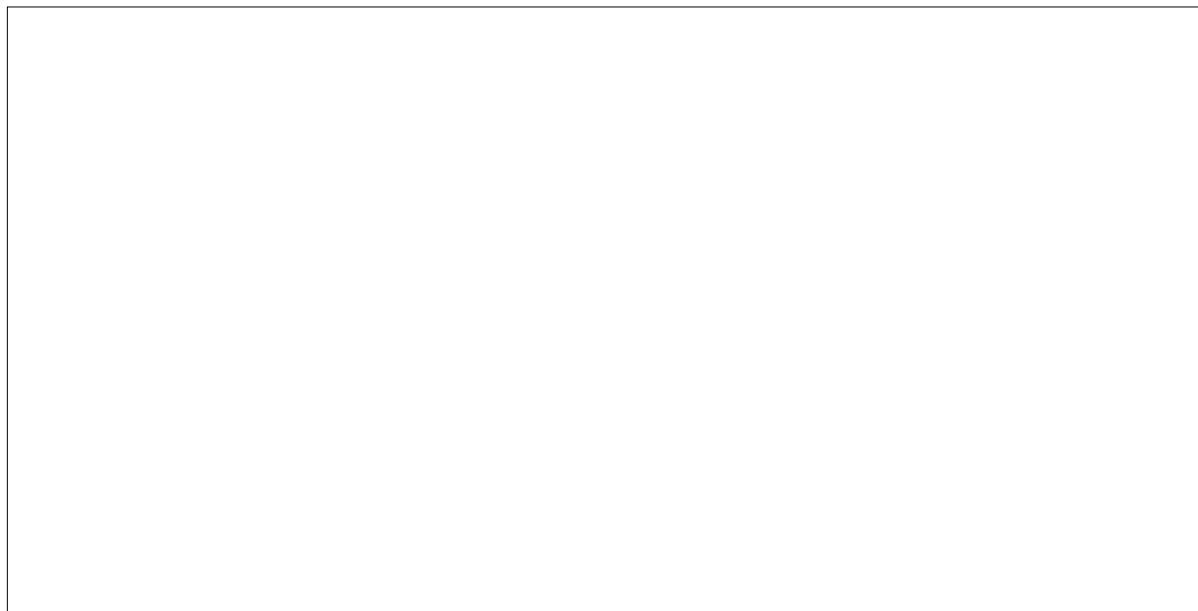
This note escapes the fire and finds its way to the newly qualified local prosecutor Alexander Korneyev, played by Aleksandr Kuznetsov.

Enticed by the letter, Korneyev eventually secures an interview with its author in his cell in the special wing for political prisoners.

To get there, Korneyev must worm his way through a maze of anonymous, dark corridors that reek of brutality yet remain eerily silent.

From his cell, Stepniak tells of how he, a veteran of the 1917 revolution, came to be incarcerated, brutalised and tortured. In doing so, he tells the story of the degeneration of the revolution itself.

Stepniak had been a senior Soviet lawyer and someone who believed



LAWYER ALEXANDER Korneyev, played by Aleksandr Kuznetsov, in Sergei Loznitsa's *The Two Prosecutors*

in the Bolshevik justice system. The sense of outrage that he, and soon Korneyev, share assumes that truth has somehow been subverted.

In a line that resonates with our own times, Stepniak rages at the way "honest, knowledgeable experts are substituted by ignorant charlatans."



We hear of how veterans of the Revolution were degraded

Korneyev is quickly on a Moscow-bound train in an attempt to bring news of the scandal in Bryansk to the attention of state prosecutor Andrey Vyshinsky, played by Anatoliy Beliy. The journey provides the film's only moments of light relief.

In Moscow, as in the prison, Korneyev has to travel through a warren of corridors before finally reaching the prosecutor's office.

And just like in the prison, he waits for hours. Only then can he make his explosive allegation—that counter-revolutionaries in the NKVD are using torture and imprisonment to undermine justice.

Vyshinsky hears Korneyev's story but orders him back to Bryansk for more evidence.

Unknown to Korneyev—and not indicated in the film—Vyshinsky

was the real state prosecutor during Stalin's show trials.

And under his authority, all the old Bolshevik leadership were put to the sword.

Two men are already sitting in his compartment when Korneyev boards the train home. They are cheery and welcoming, and have food and alcohol, and sing together.

The men describe themselves as engineers fixing the work of factory "saboteurs." But they are far from what they seem.

And by now viewers are all too aware that Korneyev, the young believer, is heading for a fall.

Two Prosecutors is a damning indictment of Stalinism and how it devoured the pioneers of October.

Two Prosecutors is available to stream now

EXHIBITIONS

DONALD LOCKE: RESISTANT FORMS

RESISTANT FORMS shows the unapologetic and unmistakable presence of Donald Locke, in the first major survey of the artist's work held in Britain.

Passing through almost 50 years of work, the exhibition shows his diverse range.

Starting with pottery, Locke's sculptures morph into biological forms. They appear to divide in uneasy but fascinating ways.

The bulk of the exhibition deals with his response to the plantations he grew up around. Locke was born in the South American country of Guyana, before its independence from Britain. He said that the plantations "dominated your life from beginning to end."

Through bullet-like sculptures, Locke explores the legacies of violence



From the Plantation series

under British colonialism and the associations of masculinity with empire.

These bullets run throughout his work over decades. They're in huge disjointed canvases, in photographs hidden under paint spills and they are printed on glass.

They become workers, regulated and stripped of individuality, working in the sugarcane fields.

Locke's canvases use familiar images to join the threads of history. Ranging from prehistoric art to images of Mohammed Ali in the boxing ring, they explore the range of black history.

His later work is rooted in Atlanta, Georgia, in the US South, where he moved towards the end of his life. Locke takes on the concept of the plantation house and African American mysticism.

Despite the abstraction, the exhibition clearly materialises the presence of stories often blotted out.

The work is undeniably sensory, full of textures almost noisy in their presence. Together, his disjointedness asks questions of us that refuse to be easily answered.

Frankie Murden

Until 30 August, Camden Art Centre, Arkwright Road, London NW3 6DG

MUSIC

Kneecap raises a middle finger to the British establishment

by DÁIRE CUMISKEY and JACK DO-ROSARIO

KNEECAP'S THIRD album FENIAN, released at the start of May, is their first since they beat terror charges against Mo Chara in September.

The album is their usual brand of unashamedly political music which will be at home in countless raves and parties.

FENIAN has a triumphant energy to it, especially in tracks like *Liars Tale*. It is exactly the energy you would expect from a group that has taken on the British state and repeatedly won.

Palestine features Arabic language rapper Fawzi and showcases Irish-Palestinian solidarity. The Palestine movement



The band's third album is a vindication for the Palestine movement

stood firmly behind Kneecap. The case was thrown out in a massive boost to the movement.

Kneecap remind us again and again that the real story is in Gaza and in the brutal actions of Israel. This sentiment is strongly

expressed in *Carnival*.

With Israel's ongoing attacks on Lebanon and its war on Iran, it is an important one.

The final track *Irish Goodbye* featuring Kae Tempest, fits perfectly with the album even

though it tackles a different topic, one the group have explored in earlier albums.

This song is about Moglaí Bap's loss of his mother to suicide.

This is addressed in the complex and emotional way in which the trio have previously addressed topics around mental health.

The album is currently sitting at Number 1 in the British charts, a first for an Irish language album.

The album and its success is a massive middle finger to the British establishment and a vindication of the Palestine movement.

Kneecap's many fans, no doubt, will be rapping along to the lyrics "Fuck Keir Starmer."

FENIAN is out now

IN BRIEF

South Wales NHS workers strike

HEALTH VISITORS in South Wales have voted to extend their strike until mid-July in a deepening fight over pay and grading.

Workers employed by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board had been due to end action this month. They will now continue for another eight weeks.

They have been on strike for 12 weeks. The workers—members of the Unite union—say bosses have forced them onto lower pay bands despite carrying out highly skilled work.

Critical care workers walk out

NURSES, CLINICAL support workers and housekeepers at three Greater Manchester hospitals struck for 48 hours last week over unequal overtime pay.

The critical care workers employed by the Northern Care Alliance walked out at hospitals in Salford, Oldham and Bury.

Strikers say they are paid less for overtime shifts booked through the Department of Health-owned NHS Professionals staff bank than directly employed NHS staff doing the same jobs.

Union leaders call for Starmer to go

AROUND 700 people joined the With Banners Held High trade union festival in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, on Saturday.

It came after far right party Reform UK took control of Wakefield council in the local elections last week.

The general secretaries of the Unite, Unison, UCU, RMT and Bfawu unions all called for Starmer's resignation, which was met with raucous applause.

Andrea Egan of Unison said, "Reform UK wants to humiliate our friends and neighbours, cut our services and attack our movement."

A local agency worker told Socialist Worker, "A lot of my coworkers are African and Asian migrants. I won't let Reform UK touch a single one of them."

■ Longer version at socialistworker.co.uk
Jack Thornton

Action over pay at Cambridge uni

AROUND 500 Unite union members at Cambridge University were set to begin a three-day strike on Wednesday against poverty pay.

The workers, who include finance, IT, library, museum and student services staff, plan further action from 20 to 22 May and 26 to 29 May.

The workers are demanding "Cambridge weighting," a supplement to their pay packets that would help to offset the rising cost of living in the city.

HEALTH



MORE THAN 200 outsourced NHS workers in south London struck for three days last week in a battle against job cuts. The GMB union members working for the infamous OCS firm in cleaning and catering departments are furious after bosses proposed 2,000 hours of cuts—a drop of 20 percent in service. Cuts will mean a huge cut in cleanliness standards and patients' food quality, says the GMB. Strikers work at three hospital sites within the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

SCHOOL SUPPORT WORKERS

TAs at two Camden schools take action

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs) at two primary schools in Camden, north London, are on strike for five days this week in their fight for regrading.

The Unison union members at Richard Cobden and Primrose Hill schools are fighting to be raised from level 3 to level 4 on the pay scale to reflect the jobs they do.

These essential workers make sure children get all the support they need. Yet they are among the lowest paid council workers. They are predominantly women.

TAs at both schools in Camden are out together for the first time in a significant escalation of the dispute with Camden council.

They took to picket lines on Monday, the first day of Sats exams.



On the picket line

TAs at Richard Cobden Primary School began their fifth round of strikes since they walked out last autumn.

One TA told Socialist Worker that workers are really determined to win their demands.

"We're going to stay out until we win," she said.

"People are working two jobs and are still unable to pay the bills," she explained.

The TA said that other local schools have already given their teaching assistants a pay rise.

"Are we doing a lesser

job than them? Are we less qualified? Less valued? That's what the implication is.

"But we know we work just as hard and do just as good a job."

A stone's throw away, TAs at Primrose Hill are fighting over the same issue.

One striker at Primrose Hill told Socialist Worker that workers are uniting at the two schools. "Getting to meet the other TAs was great," she said. "I feel very much that we're in it together."

Instead of telling TAs the money isn't there, the council should be part of a campaign for increased funding for all schools.

■ Send messages of support to unison@camden.gov.uk

■ Join picket lines, 7.30-9.15am, Primrose Hill Primary School, 40 Princess Rd, NW1 8JS and Richard Cobden Primary School, 29 Camden St, NW1 0LL

LEICESTER

WORKERS AT a school in Leicester are demanding the reinstatement of their union rep, who was suspended after a successful strike ballot.

Unison union members at Ash Field Academy, a special educational needs and disabilities (Send) school in Evington, were set to strike again on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Tom Barker is a teaching assistant and Unison steward at Ash Field, which is operated by Discovery Schools Academies Trust (DSAT).

He was suspended in

October 2025 after workers voted for strikes.

He spoke to Socialist Worker about his longstanding trade union work at Ash Field in the run up to his suspension.

Organised

"We are a well-organised workplace and union members generally are very active," said Tom. "We had a big dispute win in 2023 over pay."

This was one of the most successful education disputes in Unison's history. Tom was a principal organiser of that eight

month long dispute.

"The school joined DSAT, a multi-academy trust. In 2024 it started cutting staff by not replacing people when they left.

"When DSAT began a rushed redundancy process, members voted to strike."

Only days later, the leadership suspended Tom from his duties, on unspecified allegations.

After almost six months of suspension, DSAT has still not presented any evidence of wrongdoing.

But workers are determined to fight for his reinstatement.

EDUCATION

EAST LONDON

Send solidarity to strikers at Connaught School for Girls

EDUCATION WORKERS at the Connaught School for Girls, east London, are on strike from Wednesday of this week to 8 June.

The NEU union members first walked out on 21 April—and have been out every day except this Tuesday.

The battle at Connaught is one piece of a much bigger picture.

Schools in the borough, Waltham Forest, have faced funding shortfalls for years.

This is a situation that has been created by successive Labour-run councils.

Education workers at South Chingford Foundation School also walked out on Tuesday of last week.

They are set to stay out until 22 May in a dispute

over increased workload, job losses and unfair pay policy.

The NEU has also launched a borough-wide indicative ballot over maternity pay.

Green Party candidates have stood on the Connaught picket lines in the run-up to the local elections last week.

After the Green Party took control of the council, this is where the rubber meets the road.

The newly-elected councillors should act now to support the NEU.

● Join the pickets at Connaught School for Girls, Dyers Hall Road South, E11 4AE, daily until 8 June, from 7am.

● Join the pickets at South Chingford Foundation School, Stadium Close, E4 8ES, daily until 22 May, from 7am.

NORTH LONDON

Educators strike for pay and jobs

Educators strike over jobs at Highgate Wood School

NEU UNION members at Highgate Wood School, north London, were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday—and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of next week.

Teachers and support workers first walked out last week in a dispute with school management over conditions and compulsory redundancies.

Bosses want to make 17 workers in the school redundant.

But the workers have come out strong against management.

Action

Sam, a teacher at the school, told Socialist Worker, "We ran a ballot for action over the Easter break.

"In over 20 years as a teacher, I've never heard of that happening.

"But we had a fantastic turnout—71 percent voted and of those, every single vote was for action."

She added, "We're out here not just because of what these cuts will mean for our working conditions.

"We're out here because of the effect these cuts will have on students, fewer

subjects in far larger classes, especially."

Zed, another teacher at the school, laid the blame for the school's funding problems squarely at the bosses' feet. "School management said last year that they'd solve the school's funding problems," they told Socialist Worker.

"And now, six or seven months later, they're telling us that 10 percent of the workforce has to go.

"Class sizes have already increased this year, to 30 or more in some cases.

"We're already short staffed. One of our technicians left and they haven't been reemployed. So, a load of extra work has already been piled on us.

"These sort of things start to affect you and they're going to affect how we're able to teach these children."

The striking workers are calling for no compulsory redundancies, no increases to class sizes, no increases to workload and no reductions to the curriculum.

■ Join them on the picket line from 7am at Highgate Wood School, Montenotte Road, London N8 8RN, 7am

EDUCATION

Examiners fight bosses cheating them out of pay

by JUDEMCKECHNIE

WORKERS AT Britain's largest exam board, AQA, struck on Monday for pay restoration.

There were lively picket lines outside three AQA offices in Manchester, Guildford and Milton Keynes.

Over a million students sit AQA exams every year, with around 1,400 workers processing more than half of all GCSE and A Level qualifications taken annually in England.

The members of the Unison union AQA branch perform a range of roles, including supervising the creation of question papers, calculating and publishing grades and training examiners.

Eoin MacGabhann, branch secretary of Unison AQA, spoke to Socialist Worker from the Milton Keynes picket line.

"Over the last five years AQA has brought in a new pay framework. In that time, we've had about a 10 percent fall in real terms pay.

"At the same time, our CEO's salary has increased by £110,000."

He explained that there were problems with pay gaps



ON THE picket line in Manchester

that Unison members are battling to change.

Racist

"AQA's ethnicity median pay gap is about 35 percent.

"In this pay framework, there is a real difference in performance ratings that are given out to white workers in comparison with those from an ethnic minority background.

"Last year, you were almost twice as likely to be given an outstanding rating, and therefore higher pay, if you were white.

"This is a structurally racist pay framework and we have

tried to re-negotiate. They haven't taken it seriously, so we've had no choice but to strike."

He added that, "We hope that this encourages the employer to say, let's get back to the negotiating table and find a reasonable settlement. If it doesn't, we'll escalate."

In Manchester, over 100 people attended the picket line. Laura, one of the strikers, told Socialist Worker that the support had been incredible.

She said that workers were "up for the fight". Action short of strikes starts from Tuesday. This means that workers will

not undertake weekend work, do overtime or be on call.

"This will be indefinite, so the impact is going to be huge," said Laura. "Now our goodwill comes with a premium.

"There is a strong sense that we're all doing this together. It's not right that 10 percent of our members are using foodbanks and 25 percent are in debt."

Support the AQA workers in their fight for fair pay and conditions.

■Please send messages to support to UnisonDevasSt@aqa.org.uk

UNIVERSITIES

Fight assault on education

STUDENTS AND workers are being hit hard by the wave of redundancies and course closures in universities.

One of the latest institutions affected is the University of Hertfordshire.

Undergraduate students there will no longer be able to study history, philosophy, English literature, linguistics or creative writing.

The university says these humanities courses are no longer financially viable.

Resounding

There is industrial action in several universities. At the University of Sheffield, UCU union members struck last Thursday and Friday and are set to strike this Monday to Thursday over the threat to jobs posed by bosses' "restructures".

At Sheffield Hallam, bosses want to cut at least 130 jobs.

They also want to evade their legal responsibilities to offer the TPS pension scheme by moving teaching staff to a wholly owned subsidiary company.

UCU union members have delivered a resounding vote for action. Nearly

88 percent voted last week for strikes with a turnout of 72.6 percent.

UCU branch officer Bob Jeffery told Socialist Worker the ballot result represented "unprecedented anger".

"It's an attack on every aspect of our terms and conditions."

UCU members at the University of Leicester are on strike this Tuesday and next Monday in a dispute over job cuts.

At Heriot-Watt in Edinburgh, they are set to strike this Thursday and for the whole of graduation week in June.

At the University of Edinburgh, Goldsmiths in London and London Metropolitan University, UCU members are in a marking and assessment boycott.

Faced with this onslaught, workers in branches are doing what they can to fight back. But there is no national dispute over cuts.

The union urgently needs a plan to bring together the branches affected and coordinate the response to this assault on education.

COLLEGES

'It's a vicious cycle of cuts'

WORKERS AT Capital City College Group (CCCG) took to the picket lines for four days this week in a dispute over workloads. The group has 12 campuses across London.

Regi Pilling, a UCU union branch secretary at CCCG, told Socialist Worker, "We have a set of demands over workload. Management said they would set up a workload committee and move on things, but there has been nothing concrete. At the same time they have announced redundancies."

Regi explained that the cuts would impact access to higher education courses and trade union education. It would reduce the amount of English for Speakers of Other Languages—Esol—teaching at the college. The Esol courses are a lifeline for migrants and refugees.

Concerned

Maths teacher Adil was also concerned about workload, the prospect of job cuts and the impact this would have on the college.

"Teachers already have a lot of responsibilities," he told Socialist Worker. "Most of the students have specific educational needs.

"By cutting jobs we won't be able to cater to these learners. Those who remain will have to do even more work. How can they cut

UCU union members

staff when we are already understaffed?"

He said, "The students need more support and we already have less mental health provision."

"The same thing happening here is happening in the NHS," he added. "Health workers are leaving the profession. Here, teachers are dropping out. It's a vicious cycle."

Another striker told Socialist Worker, "People are stressed and cannot finish all the things they need to do.

"The admin responsibilities take a lot of time. The more technology they introduce, the more time it seems to take collecting data. We are spending more time on that instead of thinking about our teaching."

The strikes at CCCG are set to continue to the end of this week. It is one of several education workplaces in London where there are strikes. And many of them are facing the same issues of pay, spiralling workloads and job cuts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Resist cuts to services

LAMBETH COUNCIL, in south London, is pushing through plans to close a dementia day centre.

This will mean cuts to ten jobs. To block these plans, workers there have voted to strike this Thursday.

The decision to close the centre and offer a reduced service is driven by savings of just £350,000.

Simon Hannah, joint

branch secretary of Lambeth Unison said, "The council have run down this service to save money which is a crying shame for the people of Lambeth.

"Workers are dedicated to helping residents and saving jobs to ensure a quality service.

"Management needs to come up with realistic alternatives."

Defend Ameen Hadi

CAMPAIGNERS FOR Ameen Hadi, a Unison union activist suspended from his job with Salford City Council, are calling for solidarity.

Salford City Council placed Ameen, a youth worker, trade unionist and lifelong anti-racist campaigner, under investigation.

The move came after a racist and malicious allegation driven by followers of Nazi Tommy Robinson and far right social media agitators.

They flooded the council and local Unison branch with abusive emails demanding Ameen be sacked.

Salford Council, rather than standing up to racism, have decided to acquiesce.

Since then more than 3,000 people have signed a petition condemning far right attacks on trade unionists and the council's capitulation.

The Defend Ameen and Salford City Unison against the far right campaign is demanding Salford Council review its safeguarding

process and end the disciplinary proceedings against Ameen.

It also calls for Salford Council to implement measures to challenge discrimination, including in-person anti racist training.

The council must also make every effort to address the under-representation of black workers within its workforce.

The campaign is now calling on trade unionists and campaigners to attend a lobby on Wednesday 27 May outside Salford Council to demand Ameen's reinstatement.

After the election of 14 Reform UK local councillors, it is essential to reaffirm that there is no place for racism in Salford.

There will be an online public meeting for the campaign at 7pm on Tuesday 26 May for those who want to get involved. Let's all stand in solidarity with Ameen and Salford City Unison.

■Lobby Salford Council, 8am, Wednesday 27 May, Civic Centre, Swinton, M27 5AD

ANTI-RACISM

MORE THAN 600 people marched through Glasgow last Saturday in an anti-racist mobilisation called by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR).

The move followed Reform UK's breakthrough in Scottish elections.

The far right party won 17 seats in the parliament. Two of its candidates were elected for the Glasgow region.

Speakers at the protest attacked Reform UK's attempts to weaponise women's safety to justify racism.

Katy, co-convenor of

Women Against The Far Right Scotland, said, "they exploit the issue of systemic abuse and violence towards women to shift the blame to migrants, men of colour and Muslims.

"Reform UK is the danger to women."

SUTR organiser Hector Sierra told the rally that anti-racists will continue organising against the right.

"We say to Reform UK, don't believe for a moment that being elected to parliament makes you untouchable or respectable."

Emma Edwards



AS US-IRAN CEASEFIRE TALKS HANG BY A THREAD...

TRUMP THREATENS MORE SLAUGHTER

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE CEASEFIRE between the US and Iran was hanging by a thread as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday afternoon.

The blame lies squarely with Donald Trump, who rejected Iran's new proposal to end the war as "totally unacceptable".

It included "unreasonable" demands such as an immediate end to the war on all fronts in the Middle East, a halt to the US naval blockade of Iranian ports and guarantees of no further attacks.

The war on Iran has deepened the rift between the leaders of the US and Europe.

But the likes of Keir Starmer and French president Emmanuel Macron are deeply complicit in the slaughter.

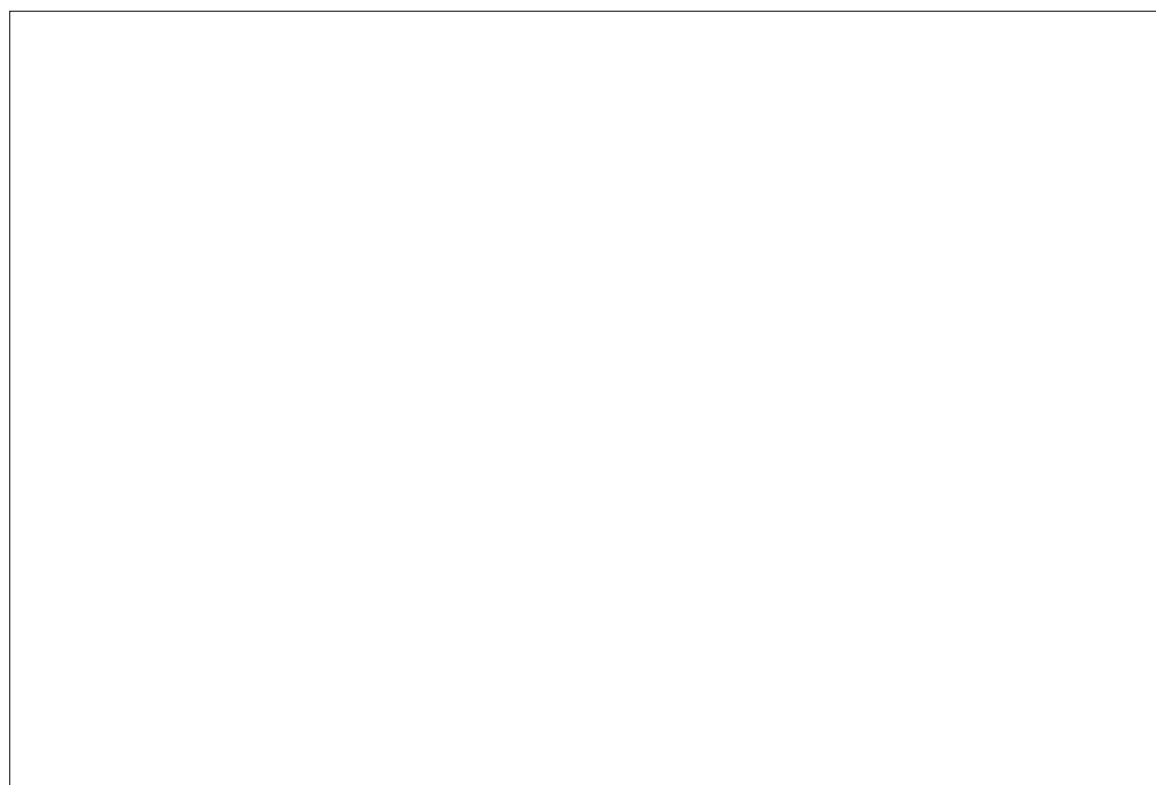
Escalation

Britain announced last weekend that the Royal Navy was sending a warship to the Middle East.

There, it could join an "international mission to safeguard shipping" in the Strait of Hormuz.

Starmer and Macron claimed the mission would only take place once fighting in the region ends, but it's a clear escalation.

As Trump threatened a return to all-out war on Iran, the Israeli terror state ramped up its assault on



DAMAGE AND destruction after US and Israeli bombardment in the war on Iran

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza this week.

On Monday, Israeli forces stormed the city of Nablus, raided homes and arrested three people.

They snatched a further four

people in the governorate, according to the Palestinian Wafa news agency.

Meanwhile, the Times of Israel newspaper has obtained a document that shows the "Board of Peace"

will not hold Israel to its ceasefire commitments if the Palestinian resistance refuses to disarm.

But why should an occupied people disarm when Israel remains armed to the teeth by the US?

The document means Israel would not face any pressure to stop its continued bombing, denial of aid and expansion of territory in Gaza.

In Lebanon, too, Israel is still murdering people. On Tuesday, Israeli forces bombed Jebchit, located in the Nabatieh region of southern Lebanon, after artillery shelled the town.

And earlier in the day Israeli air strikes murdered at least six people and wounded a further seven in the district of Tyre.

Turning out in mass numbers for the Nakba Day demonstration in London is vital.

Join the national demonstration on Saturday 16 May, 12 noon, Exhibition Road.

■ THE STOP The War Coalition is organising an international conference against war in London on Saturday 20 June.

It said, "We are hurtling towards more wars and greater global instability at an alarming rate."

"The governments of Europe are responding with massive rearmament programmes and increasing moves towards conscription."

Both must be resisted as a matter of urgency.

"The follow-up conference to the Paris Peace Conference held in October 2025 could not come at a more critical moment."

Organise to kick the merchants of death off uni campuses

THE DEFENCE Universities Alliance (DUA) is a project to deepen links between universities and the military.

It is part of the Labour government's wider Defence Industrial Strategy, which offers £80 million in funding to train students to "build the fighter jets of the future".

The first £50 million will fund 2,400 student places and £30 million will be for upgrading facilities.

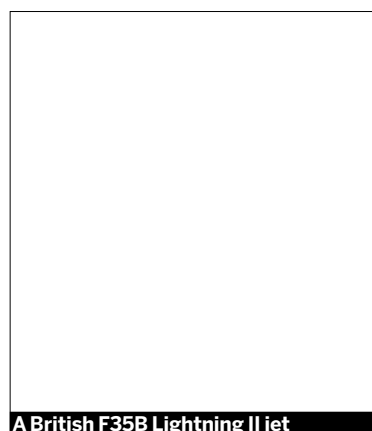
The government's interest in "defence" related education is part of what it calls a "whole of

society" approach to defence and security. Central to this is an increase in defence spending to 2.6 percent of GDP by 2027, while other spending is cut.

Opportunities

Applications are open to be part of the DUA. If successful, universities will be expected to carry out defence related research. They will not only train students, but actively promote the interests of the defence ministry and armed forces.

DUA membership comes with the prospect of further



A British F35B Lightning II jet

opportunities for funding.

Labour's policies will deepen already existing ties between universities and the military-industrial complex.

The Declassified UK website revealed last month that arms companies have been invited to sit on university advisory committees. Firms, including those arming Israel, were found in 2024 to have poured over £100 million into universities over a five year period.

Arms companies regularly appear at university careers fairs. And they pressure

institutions to monitor and crack down on student protests.

For the British state, the major fear is that China is out-innovating the West.

The push to do more defence-related teaching also plays into the culture war viewpoint that higher education is too woke.

But campus protests against Israel's genocide have the arms companies worried. With sustained campaigning, students and university workers can kick the merchants of death off our campuses.