

LABOUR'S FILTHY NEW ATTACK ON REFUGEES

● HOME SECRETARY SHABANA MAHMOOD DEMANDS ASYLUM SEEKERS PAY £10,000 >>Page 4 ● FIGHTING THE FAR RIGHT >>Page 5

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As Burnham declares new era for British politics...

2024 - 2026
**NOW BURY
STARMER'S
ROTTEN
POLICIES**

Hit back at cost of living, war and far right

● What does Burnham stand for? >>Page 3 ● Why is Farage hiding? >>Page 5

HEALTH

Shocking failures of maternity care

THE OCKENDEN Report published last week has exposed the horrors of maternity care in Britain.

The review was ordered after patients raised the alarm over unsafe maternity care at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

It covers more than 500 incidents of mothers and babies being harmed between 2006 and 2024.

>>Page 7

MIDDLE EAST



Israel wants more killings

ISRAEL'S LEADERS have declared that the terror state will indefinitely occupy parts of Lebanon, Syria and Gaza.

But, far from being a sign of strength, these occupations show the political isolation of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the failure of the war against Iran.

Meanwhile, the situation in besieged Gaza remains catastrophic.

>>Page 16

UNITED STATES

The unfinished revolution

SHOULD WE celebrate the American Revolution?

For its 250th anniversary, Donald Trump is planning a big party with right wing has-beens for entertainment.

But that should not prevent the left from commemorating the revolution's radical heart and the inspiring wave of resistance it unleashed.

>>Pages 10&11



THE THINGS THEY SAY

‘Ed Miliband is the single person who has done the most to deindustrialise our country and make us poorer.’

Says **Kemi Badenoch**, leader of the party that did the most to deindustrialise Britain in the 1980s

‘Business will welcome Andy Burnham’s clear focus on growth and delivery’

Rain Newton-Smith, leader of the CBI bosses’ organisation welcomes a Burnham government

‘Business will welcome the commitments to sound public finances, upholding fiscal rules and maintaining investor confidence’

Rain Newton-Smith

‘Well done to all involved. Quite the contrast to the woke nonsense we suffered in front of His Majesty the King in Holyrood today’

Reform UK MSP **Mark Simpson** congratulates an Orange Order march in Aberdeenshire

‘A pair of eyelashes and a black T-shirt’

Kemi Badenoch tries to make a joke about Andy Burnham on X

Education report is a class act in racist dog whistles

by **PAT MEUSEL**

“FOR THE first time in a long time white working class children have a government that will fight for them.”

If you had to guess, you might think those words had come out of the mouth of Reform UK’s Nigel Farage or Restore Britain’s Rupert Lowe.

But those were the words of Bridget Phillipson, Labour’s education secretary, after the publication of the Independent Inquiry into White Working Class Educational Outcomes.

The inquiry, published on Monday, was commissioned by the Star Academies Trust with the support of the Department for Education.

Free

It defines “white working class children as white pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) and then describes what it calls a “white working class disadvantage gap”.

This is the “persistent gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged white British pupils and their peers”.

So, for example, only 36 percent of “white working class students” achieve a

grade 4 or above in English and maths GCSE by the end of secondary school. That’s compared with 72 percent of students not in receipt of FSM.

The inquiry concludes that the education system in this country is uniquely ill suited to “serving the interests of white working class children”.

But there is a serious problem with the report.

It ignores the reality that all working class children are failed by an underfunded, exam factory school system.

Those inequalities are

rooted in class, not whiteness.

In fact, the report doesn’t compare the grades “white working class children” to black of Asian children on FSM.

It fails to mention that other groups rank below its figures for what it defines as the “white working class”.

For example, of Gypsy and Roma students in receipt of FSM, only 9 achieve a grade 4 or above in English or maths GCSE.

The report fails to mention that, among those not in receipt of FSM, 71 percent “white British”

students make the grades compared to 59 percent Black Caribbean students.

Anna, a parent and teacher in east London, told Socialist Worker, “All of the research shows that economics map onto education attainment—and that they always have.”

“The education system in this country is not fit for purpose for children from working class families across the board.”

Anna argued that, if the Labour government was serious about supporting working class students, it would boost funding.

Sizes

“Cut class sizes, give us more money, give us proper provision for students with special education needs and disabilities,” she said.

Julie, a parent and teacher in north London, added, “This focus on the white working class, as separate from the working class as a whole, is feeding into the rise of the far right.”

Indeed, Nigel Farage has recently published an essay titled, Britain is a Two-Tier State—Against White People.

In his essay, he calls for the repeal of the Equality Act.

This report will only add fuel to the fire—while doing nothing to help working class children.

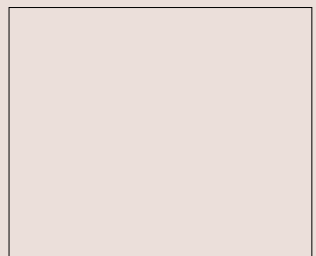
EDUCATION SECRETARY Bridget Phillipson speaks at a right wing think tank

Workers’ action shuts school in heatwave

As temperatures soared, workers at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School in Portishead, north Somerset, took action for health and safety.

Management of the multi-academy trust that runs St Joseph’s, the Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust, dithered and delayed about whether to shut or stay open during a heatwave.

But the NEU union rep in the school called a meeting where members voted unanimously to walk out on Wednesday and Thursday of last week.



Jon, branch secretary of North Somerset NEU and a member of the union’s national executive committee, spoke to Socialist Worker about the inspiring example.

“This is exactly the sort of collective action in the

workplace that builds the confidence of workers,” he said.

“It shows what working people can do when they act together.”

Dangerous

The workers were exercising their rights under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act—to refuse to work in conditions they reasonably believe to be dangerous.

There are laws that govern how cold a workplace can be.

But shockingly there are no restrictions on how hot

a workplace can be before workers aren’t required to come in.

So, instead, it’s left up to bosses and what they think is reasonable.

At least 313 schools across England and Wales decided to shut their doors last week.

But if more followed the lead of the workers at St Joseph’s, that number would be much bigger.

This is the sort of collective action on the part of all workers that will be required to combat the ever increasing effects of climate catastrophe.

Inequality and racism drive mental health service crisis

OVER ONE million children in England were referred to mental health services last year. That’s an increase of 10 percent from the previous year—and nearly double the number from 2018-19.

Anxiety was listed as the most common reason in the damning report from Children’s Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza, which was published this week.

The report exposed the long wait times that children face—the average is 128 days and 60,000 were waiting more than two years for support. That’s an increase of 44,000 from the previous year.

Children with suspected autism and neurodevelopmental conditions were more likely than other children to be waiting over a year for support.

Only around 13 percent of children with suspected autism and 19 percent with neurodevelopmental conditions went on to receive support by the end of the year. The median wait time for autistic children was one year.

Mica, a former ADHD nurse in Kensington and Chelsea in west London, told Socialist Worker “This absolutely does not surprise me.”

“Waiting lists have been ridiculously high because of cuts to staffing.

“I was the only ADHD nurse in Kensington and Chelsea and when I left, they didn’t replace me.”

Children in deprived areas were significantly more likely to be referred, with those from the poorest 10 percent of areas making up 15 percent of all referrals.

The report found that black and Asian children were less likely than white children to be referred.

By the time black and Asian children are referred, many are already in a mental health crisis.

At least 25 percent of the children who were referred were already in crisis.

Andy Burnham, who is set to be the Labour prime minister, has promised to restore “hope in every heart”.

Unions and campaigners have to pressure him to fund mental health services—and kick out the private firms.

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ANDY BURNHAM PROMISES HOPE—BUT THERE’S A STING

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS

ANDY BURNHAM got back into parliament by being against Keir Starmer. He is now trying to prove that he will govern differently to Starmer—but not too differently.

Burnham, the newly-elected Labour MP for Makerfield and would-be party leader, made his first major speech on Monday.

Where Starmer sounded like a neoliberal technocrat, Burnham leant into the language of Labourism.

He spoke of how working class people had “changed a British state built not with them in mind”.

There were some policies alongside Labourite vibes. Burnham signalled that he would bring in more social democratic reforms than Starmer—but suggested it wouldn’t be immediate.

He promised the “biggest council-house building programme since the post war period” in “all parts of the country”.

“If you don’t give people a good home, what chance do you have of giving them a good life,” he said.

There were promises of public control, if not ownership, of some services. “We will ensure all parts of Britain are able to take greater public control of essential services” such as energy and transport, he said.

Labour would introduce “ten-year plans to bring down costs of these essentials”.

But the section that did the heaviest lifting tried to manage people’s expectations. “Ours is a ten-year mission to raise people’s living standards,” he said. “I know people can’t wait forever for change.

“I heard on doorsteps in Makerfield how people need a bit of extra now to help with rising costs.

“I will do my very best to deliver it. While not taking risks with the public finances, I will seek to give Britain some breathing space as soon as I can.”

Problems

This snag in the speech points to a much deeper set of problems.

The British state—and the Labour Party—are struggling to adapt to a new global order.

The “rules-based international order” which saw the US dominate the world through financial institutions and military alliances, is in crisis. Donald Trump has shifted to a more predatory form of imperialism.

The “special relationship”—which saw Britain as a junior partner to the US—is under strain.

The free market triumphalism is gone and ruling classes are looking to forms of “state capitalism” to help them compete internationally.

The Labour Party’s strategy under Starmer was to copy “Bidenomics”. This saw the

previous US administration under Joe Biden use state intervention in the economy to make US capitalism more competitive against China.

So chancellor Rachel Reeves pushed the idea of “securonomics”—using state intervention to boost growth.

It was, at best, Bidenomics on the cheap.

Economic growth has been sluggish for the past decade. And, if the Labour government wanted to boost growth, it would have to increase

investment through boosting taxes or borrowing.

But it didn’t want to do that for fear of upsetting the rich—and instead pushed austerity mark 2. Starmer still stuffed the Labour government with the ghosts of Blairism, but their neoliberal doctrines no longer fitted.

In the 2000s, Tony Blair had encouraged a financial boom and used the tax revenues from growth to spend more on the NHS, schools and public services.

Stagnation

Today, the whole system is in crisis from economic stagnation to climate chaos and the threat of war.

That means big business demands Labour waters down reforms that put up barriers to profit-making.

And it means Labourism has little room to deliver reforms without a confrontation with the profit system.

The outcome under Starmer was a poisonous mix of bowing to big business and lurches rightwards over immigration and trans+ rights.

What’s Burnham’s alternative? He too wants to use the state to make British capitalism more efficient and use the proceeds of growth to deliver some social democratic reforms.

“Good growth in every postcode and hope in every heart,” as he put it.

Burnham called for a “streamlined state with a clear purpose” and devolution to cities and regions. A new “Number 10 North” unit based

in Manchester he said would be the “nerve centre of a rewired Britain”.

But Burnham claims all that can be delivered without breaking from “the discipline of our fiscal rules”.

These self-imposed rules saw Starmer and Reeves push austerity 2.0—and Burnham’s not willing to liberate Labour from this orthodoxy.

These contradictions mean a Burnham government won’t fundamentally break with Starmer. Before he reinvented himself as a soft left regional mayor, Burnham was a Blairite health secretary in the 2000s.

Burnham has already made clear that he backs home secretary Shabana Mahmood’s plans to clamp down on immigration (see page 4). And he has thrown trans+ people under the bus and backed the EHRC’s transphobic guidance. This means a Burnham government will not be a bulwark against the growth of Reform UK or Restore Britain.

Nor has he promised a break with Labour’s support for Israel’s genocide—which proved a key factor in Starmer’s demise.

But there will be a bounce for Burnham and his promises of reform will raise expectations of many working class people for change.

The labour movement should ramp up pressure on Burnham to break with Starmer’s rotten legacy.

The only way to do that is relying on our own strength on picket lines and the streets to fight for change, not putting our faith in Labour.

THE WOULD-BE Labour leader delivered his first major speech at the People’s History Museum in Manchester



A Burnham government will not be a bulwark against the growth of Reform UK

★Fight Farage ★Resist Starmer

join the
SWP





Labour's safe routes are no more than a racist ruse

by CAMILLAROYLE

SHABANA MAHMOOD has unveiled more plans to attack migrants and to smear them as fake asylum seekers.

On Tuesday, as Socialist Worker went to press, the home secretary revealed new immigration measures that would see asylum seekers forced to pay £10,000 each for their living costs or be denied settled status in Britain.

Mahmood also wants to increase the time it takes before people can apply for leave to remain from five years to ten years—and to 15 years for those classed as “low skilled”.

It has left people who have built a life here facing deportation. These changes are not part of the bill—but could be introduced in the future.

She is planning to deport tens of thousands of people whose asylum claims are rejected rather than allowing them to appeal the decision.

Mahmood wants to sugarcoat the plans by proposing some limited new routes for asylum seekers.

These would allow organisations such as universities and businesses to sponsor people to come to Britain. They would then be responsible for helping them find work and housing.

But the Labour government admits the numbers of people coming via these safe routes would be capped and start from a low base.

Mahmood has also announced a proposal to allow members of the public to decide on asylum appeals. Given the widespread misinformation and anti-migrant rhetoric, it is a recipe for more deportations.



People are forced to use unsafe routes. They have no other choice



Shabana Mahmood

Sadia Sikandar is a refugee living in Scotland who is an award-winning photographer and founder of the charity Seham & Najma.

She told Socialist Worker, “We always campaigned for safe routes. If there were safe routes, a lot of people would come via safe routes. People wouldn’t have to risk their lives.”

But she explained that the government has not been clear about which refugees it allows in. “People from places like Afghanistan and Libya still come via unsafe routes. They don’t have any choice.”

Sadia said there should be more opportunities for families to reunite. “My mum should be here, but unfortunately I can’t bring her. I wish the government would rethink this.”

The Labour government is under pressure from the Conservatives and Reform UK to try to look tough on migration. But its strategy of emulating the far right has only driven politics further to the right.

Mahmood also faces pressure from within Labour. Home office minister Mike Tapp has broken ranks by saying that migrant care workers should not have to wait years to stay in the country. Mahmood is threatening to have him sacked.

If the home secretary is forced into a U-turn on these proposals it will be a relief for migrant workers.

But Labour would still be creating a two-tier system where some are celebrated as “deserving” migrants while others face suspicion.

Andy Burnham should end Labour’s war on migrants as one of his first acts in office as prime minister. But we can’t rely on waiting for Labour. We need to say that all migrants and refugees are welcome.

PROTESTERS RECLAIMED the street in Leith where the Islamophobic attack took place

5,000 people take to the streets of Edinburgh in anger over racist attack

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

EDINBURGH SENT a clear message last Saturday—the streets belong to us, not the racists.

Some 5,000 people marched in Leith for the Reclaim Our Streets demonstration, determined to show that hatred and violence will be met with resistance.

The protest came after a shocking Islamophobic attack that has left many people fearful.

Two weeks ago, a man with a bladed weapon attacked five men, including some leaving a mosque. The man shouted Islamophobic abuse as he was arrested and claimed he was “doing this for his country”.

Together

Following the attack, trade unionists, anti-racists, students, community campaigners and local residents stood shoulder to shoulder, united behind a simple message—we will stand together against those who seek to spread fear and hatred.

Felix, an activist with Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) in

Edinburgh told Socialist Worker, “What is driving this violence is real despair.

“We’ve had years of austerity and neoliberalism. And sadly this is being diverted by right wing demagogues to attack migrants and to deflect from the real causes of problems,” he said.

They added, “Reform UK’s Nigel Farage is happy to keep us fighting among ourselves while he and his mates continue to profit.

“Farage called for ‘pure cold rage’ after the horrific murder of Henry Nowak and today’s march in Edinburgh was a response to that.

“Today shows that the majority of people in Edinburgh and Leith are anti-racist.

“It is the job of anti-racists to mobilise and continue to get out on to the streets,” Felix said.

Many black people, Muslims, migrants and refugees are scared and angry about what comes next. Some are questioning whether it is safe to walk their own streets, travel home at night, or go about their daily lives without fear of abuse or attack.

That is exactly what the far right wants. They want people to feel isolated and alone and to retreat into silence.

Sophie, a student in Edinburgh who attended the protest, told Socialist Worker that there was a minute’s silence on the march for all victims of racist attacks.

Fight

“We were out to say that immigrants in our community are loved, wanted and respected. We are all willing to come out and fight for their safety,” they said.

Racism is encouraged by politicians who scapegoat migrants while failing to tackle low pay, crumbling public services and the cost of living crisis.

History shows that racists and fascists can only be beaten when mass movements deny them the confidence to organise and when workers refuse to be divided.

Saturday’s mobilisation is an important step, but it must not be the last.

Every workplace, college and community should build the anti-racist movement.

Far right outnumbered in Surrey and east London

by PAT MEUSEL and REBECCA GIVAN

AROUND 100 anti-racists came together for a community event in Surrey called by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) Epsom and Ewell last Saturday.

It was a brilliant response to the 150 racists who ran riot through Epsom in April, targeting asylum seekers and refugees.

Tommy, a local activist in SUTR, told Socialist Worker, “People were angry after the riots. Angry at the far right, racist thugs who came in from out of town to stir up trouble in Epsom.

“But they also wanted to do something with that anger, to direct it somewhere. They wanted to get organised,” he said.

“This is the first event put on by SUTR Epsom and Ewell. And it’s a brilliant start.

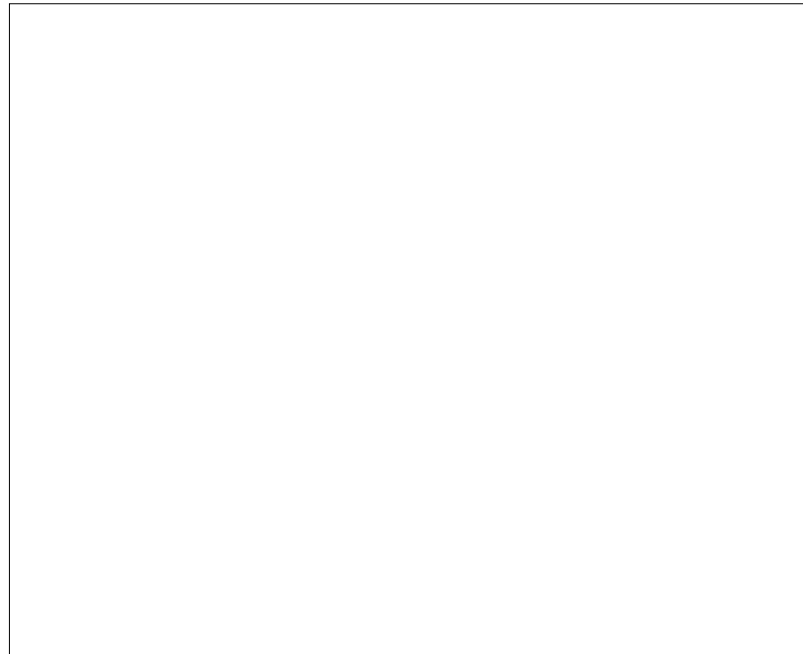
“We’ve brought together a big, broad coalition of anti-racists, to make clear that the far right and racists are not welcome in Epsom,” Tommy added.

The event was supported by local branches of the Greens and the Labour Party, as well as activist groups like Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network and Sutton Friends of Palestine. It was also supported by the local Muslim and Sikh communities.

There was a single counter-protester. He cut a sad figure, sitting alone on a bench, covered in a Union Jack.

And he soon slinked off, as families and friends danced to music and enjoyed food and free refreshments provided by the local Sikh community.

Michaela, an activist from SUTR, stressed that “We’re not outnumbered. We’re out organised. But they’ve made



THOUSANDS OF anti-racists mobilised in Britain last week

a brilliant start today here in Epsom.”

Robert, a Unite union rep and worker at the Institute of Cancer Research, told Socialist Worker what brought him to the event.

“I’m on strike. And I met SUTR activists on my picket line last week. After they told me about this event, I knew I had to get involved.

“There’s so much fear, hatred and misinformation out there. We need love, hope and unity to overcome that,” he explained.

Meanwhile in east London, transphobe Posie Parker wanted to come to Whitechapel, east London, last Saturday to spread her hate.

But a demonstration called by Tower Hamlets SUTR and Women Against The Far Right (WAFR)

made sure she couldn’t. Some 150 anti-racist activists rallied to counter her hate.

Parker, along with 30 of her supporters, was instead stuck in a corner of Victoria Park.

Beth, from south east London, told Socialist Worker, “We’ve got to show a united front against the far right who are intent on spreading racist hate.”

Rebecca, from Tower Hamlets, added, “Posie Parker is a threat to east London.”

Parker claimed that Tower Hamlets, an area that has a large Muslim population and a left wing mayor, is unsafe for women.

“I’m a single woman and I walk around here all the time. It’s totally safe,” said Rebecca.

Beth added, “Our communities make us safe.”

Women Against The Far Right are getting organised in the north east

WOMEN AGAINST The Far Right (WAFR) organisation successfully launched itself in the north east last Thursday to a sold out event and a full house of over 80 people.

The launch was chaired by the women’s officer for Unison union Newcastle branch, Lucy Edache. We heard from Mina Kaur, black members officer for the Darlington NEU education union, Mez Nisa of Newcastle Unites and Jenny Black, former Unison national executive committee member. Sophia Beach spoke for WAFR as a member of the national steering committee.

There was a shared recognition of the need to organise against the far right’s threats to women and the weaponisation of violence against women to spread racism.



Speakers also recognised the threat Reform UK poses towards trans+ women and the LGBT+ community.

Educators, trade unionists and activists spoke about how the community and workplaces are

changing with the growth of the far right. They also recognised the threats of a Reform UK government.

We know that, overwhelmingly, the threat to women’s safety is at home.

Some 97 percent of violent and sexual assaults against women are committed by someone they know.

We also know that at least 20 percent of the 949 people arrested in the 2024 racist riots had past records of domestic abuse. In some areas in England this number rises to over 50 percent.

To a reception of cheers, Sophia told us that the way to stop the far right is by outnumbering them on the streets with the broadest movement possible.

Eve Clayton in Newcastle

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

FARAGE’S GRIFT IS CATCHING UP WITH HIM

NIGEL FARAGE is a notorious self-promoter. But it turns out not all publicity is good publicity. And taking a £5 million bribe will get you in trouble—even in British politics.

Farage has appeared on BBC Question Time 38 times. Jeremy Corbyn, an MP for 42 years, has appeared on the programme 5 times and two of those were party leaders’ debates.

Farage gets paid £500,000 a year to appear on GB News frothing with indignation about another invented threat to the West.

Three years ago, he bagged £1.5 million for appearing on the TV show I’m a Celebrity.

He is definitely not shy. But recently he has gone very quiet. So quiet that some commentators suggested his absence weakened Reform UK’s campaign in Makerfield.

Farage’s retreat began when his £5 million “gift” from crypto billionaire Christopher Harborne was exposed. He accepted this bung just before he made the decision to stand as an MP.

Last Tuesday, he suddenly polluted every major news channel to justify transferring the £5 million. But every interview was a car crash.

“Let’s be bloody clear”, Farage told BBC breakfast news twice, “it was an unconditional gift. I can spend it on cars if I want to.”

But Farage also described himself as the “most attacked and endangered politician in Britain for well over a decade.”

The gift was not, in his version of the story, unconditional—it was supposedly for his security.

When a journalist asked if he had spent any of the gift on security, Farage snarled that it was no one’s business. He told her he was “deliberately, wilfully” refusing to answer.

But everyone knows that when billionaires flash the cash they want something in return.

Other rats in the Reform UK sack are smelling blood. Robert Jenrick suggested it was legitimate for the media to ask questions about the donation—so it was their business after all.

Launching GB News in the US, Farage bragged, “They’re going to say that I’m a drinker. They’re going to say that I’m a smoker. They’re going to say that I’m a gambler. They’re going to say that I’m a womaniser. The trouble is, it’s all true. So really, really, what can they hit me with?”

How about being exposed as a nasty, corrupt grifter?

Farage has also been exposed as a racist—by thousands of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) campaigners who have leafleted wards and protested against Reform UK events.

And election results show that hundreds of thousands reject Reform UK’s racism, sexism and bigotry.

Reform UK is not an unstoppable electoral bandwagon. But we can’t just wait with fingers crossed—we must use the corruption scandal to drive home our advantage against Reform UK.

MATERNITY SCANDAL WAS MADE BY CUTS

FOLLOWING THE brutal findings of the Ockenden review published last week (see page 7), Baroness Valerie Amos has recommended the introduction of a maternity commissioner.

This approach falls short of the logical conclusions of the report and of the demands of bereaved parents.

Amos made eight recommendations. She wants to introduce a maternity triage system and give the right to an immediate inquiry on any standard of care that families find lacking. She also stresses the need to address the racism and discrimination “embedded” in the current system.

But the major issues facing the maternity and neonatal healthcare system are the same as those facing the rest of the health sector—understaffing and underfunding. The report shows that there has been a “huge decline in community midwifery over the 2000s”.

The report details how thinly stretched workers in the maternity and neonatal wards are.

An additional 73 midwives were needed at the Nottingham hospital trust alone to provide the basic standard of care needed.

Funding shows an even grimmer image. The NHS has been the victim of a series of austerity attacks by successive governments.

In 2024-25 the Service Development Funding for the maternity sector was £95 million. In 2025-26 it was slashed to just £2 million.

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Europe's backing risks widening war

EUROPE HAS been sweltering under the kind of heatwave we must get used to. Meanwhile, at its peripheries two major wars stubbornly continue. It has little influence over one, between the US and Iran, though it suffers its economic effects.

But in the other, between Russia and Ukraine, the European Union (EU) and Britain have taken over as Ukraine's major sponsors. This is in line with Donald Trump's national security strategy, which leaves European imperialism to deal with Russia. It is happening as the Ukraine war is becoming increasingly unstable and dangerous.

Until a few months ago, the fighting remained a slugging match. The Russian forces have been driving to wrest control of the Donbas region. Slowly but surely, at a terrible cost in casualties, Russia's superiority in air power, troop numbers and material forces was allowing it to gain ground.

But the balance has now shifted thanks to Ukraine's superiority in the same precision-strike technologies that allowed Iran to hold off and retaliate against the US and Israeli aerial bombardments. Ukraine has been making large-scale use of its first-person-view suicide drones. These can be guided to their targets with high precision along fibre-optic cables that make jamming very difficult.

On the frontline the drones have helped to make up for Ukraine's troop shortages and slowed the Russian advance. The longer-range versions have allowed "deep strikes" hundreds of kilometres into Russian territory. These have set oil refineries ablaze, reduced the scale of the 9 May Victory Day parade in Moscow and temporarily cut off the strategic Crimean peninsula that Russia seized in 2014. On Sunday Russian president Vladimir Putin admitted that Ukrainian strikes have caused "a certain shortage" of fuel.

Offensive

Europe is deeply involved in this offensive. The EU is lending €90 billion to finance Ukrainian military production. Some of this production is shifting further west, to Germany, Britain and Denmark. The aim isn't just to weaken Russia, but to tap Ukrainian expertise in precision-strike technology. The Royal Navy is ordering at least six drone-operating "common combat vessels" instead of old-style destroyers.

Ukraine's recent successes have encouraged a celebratory mood in European capitals and more of the war talk that is used to justify higher military spending. But, as the Russia expert Matthew Blackburn points out, "Striking a nuclear power's strategic assets and leadership lacks any Cold War precedent."

Vladimir Lenin liked to quote the great Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz, who famously wrote, "War is the continuation of politics by other means." In a world dominated increasingly by the economic and geopolitical rivalries among imperialist states and regional powers, what are the interests of the different actors?

Answering this question, in the case of the Iran war, suggests that, despite flare ups like that over the weekend, the US and Iran will probably not return to outright war. Despite Trump's bluster, the costs of trying to achieve regime change in Iran have proved too high.

But the same calculus doesn't apply to Putin. He's invested so much in the war that it's hard for him to back down. Russia has been using its air superiority to launch glide bombs at Ukraine's frontline and cities. It's also ramping up its own drone capabilities.

Blackburn argues, however, that Russia has so far avoided "devastating Ukraine's critical infrastructure". But, "If Moscow concludes that its restraint inside Ukraine is being weaponised by Kyiv to inflict deep, humiliating costs on the Russian heartland, its calculus will shift. Instead of going for Ukrainian infrastructure, Moscow may seek to redress the asymmetry in deep strikes and restore deterrence by targeting the true source of Ukraine's new capacities—European logistical hubs and the manufacturing facilities."

This would leave the European imperialist states facing a widening war with the power possessing the largest number of nuclear warheads.

It's anyone's guess whether they could count on the support of the US, as they hoped they could during the Cold War. Why fuel a war that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and could take us close to the nuclear brink?

LETTERS

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Churchill's murderous legacy cannot be forgotten

THE CONTROVERSY over Winston Churchill's role in the 1943 Bengal famine that killed more than 3 million people resurfaced last week.

Award winning artist Helen Cammock had an installation withdrawn from the National Portrait Gallery in London. This came after 59 lords signed a letter accusing her of vilifying Churchill's memory by accusing him of deliberately starving Indians.

The lords ignored what Churchill's friends thought and did at the time. In December 1942,

the Viceroy of India warned London of an imminent famine.

In August 1943, secretary of state for India, Leo Amery, a close friend and ally of Churchill, asked for 5 million tons of grain for Bengal. In October 1943, new governor-general of India Archibald Wavell asked for 1.5 million tons.

Starved

Churchill turned all of these requests down.

As a result, between 800,000 and 5 million people died from

starvation and diseases exacerbated by malnutrition.

This should not be surprising given Churchill's opinion on Indians. He said that they were "the beastliest people in the world next to the Germans" and that Hindus in particular were "a foul race".

Amery, even wrote in his diary, "I told Churchill that I didn't see much difference between his outlook and Hitler's"—who was Churchill's friend at the time.

The Raj had done plenty of other things to

bring about the famine. It created a disastrous rationing system that made each province into its own separate economy.

In early 1942, fearing a Japanese invasion the army destroyed all river transport in east Bengal. This meant that when relief supplies did arrive, there were no boats for distribution.

Churchill was at the top of this, and interfered in every aspect of the war. No matter how the lords wriggle, he was always responsible.

Barry Pavier
Bradford

Walk out on Reform UK

THE BELFAST knife attack was a horrific act of violence, so were the race riots that soon followed.

I have noticed the knife attack being increasingly described as "barbaric" and "medieval".

We must be clear that these are right wing dog-whistles used only to describe attacks when carried out by black or brown people.

They want to reinforce racist ideas of black and brown men, more specifically Muslim men, as inherently savage and violent.

Islam is often referred to by far right figures such as Nigel Farage as a backwards religion that is incompatible with so-called "British values".

This was further reinforced by Reform UK member of the Senedd Joe Martin, who during a debate at the Welsh parliament, described an attack by a Sudanese person as "inevitable".

Martin's comments were met with walkouts by other Senedd members from Plaid Cymru, the Green Party and Labour.

We must challenge the continuous demonisation of migrants and take on Reform UK—who use their platform in the Senedd to spread hate and division.

Kwabena Devonish
Cardiff

AS PRIME minister, Winston Churchill helped plunge India into famine in the 1940s

The statistics don't lie. Britain is anti-racist

DESPITE THE rise of the far right with young people, an overwhelming majority of Gen Z agree that refugees are welcome.

We are witnessing the far right grow. But 60 percent of young people in Britain are anti racists, according to an Ipsos poll.

We witnessed this during the Together demonstration on the 28 March. 500,000 people took to the streets, many of them young, to say that we do not stand for racism.

Racism is a tool to divide workers and redirect people's anger

away from capitalism.

When solidarity emerges, racism is intensified to destroy it.

When the political climate is ripe for workers' unity, the media will churn out racist scapegoating.

It is more crucial than ever that we stand against the far right's bigotry because workers who cannot stand and fight together are unable to mount effective resistance. The cost of that failure is borne by all workers, no matter their race.

Rimaz Ahmed
East London

Wigan's class roots

WITH ALL the hype around the Makerfield by-election one factor has been missed.

Wigan—which makes up part of Makerfield—has a reputation, originally built upon the coal mines, as a working class town.

Along with many other such towns it has lost out as the economic base of Britain moved from industry to finance.

The people of Makerfield at this by-election showed that they have not lost that working class spirit—which puts caring for one's community at the centre.

Ralph Tebbutt
Medway

Report details failures of maternity care at Nottingham hospital trust

The review shows women being treated with cruelty, staff struggling and racism, writes Rebecca Givan

THE OCKENDEN Report published last Wednesday has exposed the horrors of maternity care in Britain.

The review was ordered in 2023 after patients raised the alarm over unsafe maternity care at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH).

It covers more than 500 incidents of mothers and babies being harmed between 2006 and 2024.

The report shows women being treated with cruelty, workers struggling and widespread racism.

One woman was treated with aromatherapy against national guidelines which state, “Do not offer or advise aromatherapy.”

The report describes women being denied support for pain during labour.

One woman describes the process as “brutal” and “traumatic” as she was denied pain relief, screamed at and told “pull yourself together” by midwifery staff.

Procedures took place without discussion with patients—and without obtaining patient consent.

Dehumanised

The report says that consent was often “implied” and that women felt a loss of control over their bodies.

One woman was only given paracetamol just minutes before she gave birth.

Women in the report describe feeling dehumanised by NUH.

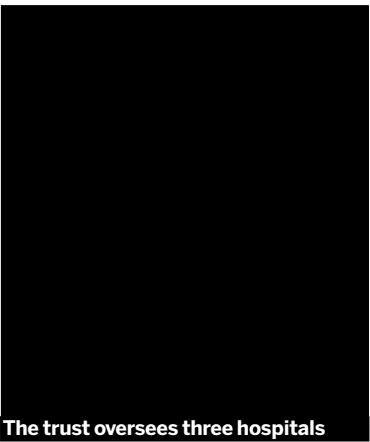
One woman describes feeling like “a machine to produce milk”.

The Ockenden Report also describes a “culture of gatekeeping” as women were told they would not be admitted unless they called the hospital three times.

Black and minority ethnic patients in particular were not cared for by NUH.

One worker told the review that black and brown women faced “covert racism” and that Roma women were treated “appallingly”.

Another worker describes black patients being labelled as “too loud”.



The trust oversees three hospitals

Migrant doctors were “targeted and undermined”.

The report details a culture of bullying in the NUH. Managers were described as rude and aggressive—and workers who brought up concerns were dismissed as troublemakers.

Short staffing made issues worse. The report found that an additional 73 midwives would have been needed to deliver proper care.

There aren’t enough highly qualified workers on the wards as burnout has forced midwives out of the NHS.

Toxic

All these pressures create a toxic atmosphere where some midwives become desensitised to women in agony and distress.

Mike Scott from Keep Our NHS Public in Nottingham told Socialist Worker, “There have now been a series of inquiries into maternity services, but little has been changed.”

“After this initial shock, politicians will promise this will never happen again—and the reports are binned.”

“Unless we all campaign for more money and more staff the same thing will happen again. Everyone has a right to the best possible services and the government has a duty to provide them.”

BEREAVED PARENTS hear the findings of the Ockenden Report

US pilot gets away with brutal sexual abuse as British state allows cover up

A US fighter pilot stationed in Britain drugged, raped and strangled Sarah Steele.

He got off with a slap on the wrist because the British government allowed him to be tried in a US military court.

The case lays bare the reality of how imperial states protect soldiers who commit horrific crimes against women.

In 2023, Steele, an academic, met US fighter pilot Jacob Wulfson on the dating app Tinder.

Before meeting up, she laid out explicit ground rules that he was to wear a condom and that he wasn’t to touch her neck “ever” Wulfson agreed.

Strangled

When they did meet, Wulfson drugged Steele with Etizolam, a powerful sedative, and raped and strangled her until she passed out.

She woke up naked in a bath with injuries to her head, neck and genitals.

A friend of Sarah’s said it looked like someone had “beat the shit out of her.”

After raping her, Wulfson sent Sarah a self-pitying apology. He said he is “horrified” with



Jacob Wulfson (centre) drugged and raped Sarah Steele

himself and “needs some time” to figure out who he is.

Wulfson’s defence was led by Tim Bilecki, who makes YouTube videos helping soldiers avoid the consequences of their crimes.

He blamed Steele for her injuries, accusing her of “freaking out” and weaponising past traumas she has suffered.

Despite the crime taking place outside of Wulfson’s base, the British state allowed the trial to take place in a US military court.

Unlike in civil courts, Steele had no right to anonymity and the case was tried by a jury made up entirely of men from Wulfson’s base.

His witnesses said Wulfson’s behaviour in combat showed his “true character”.

One mission he was on in Afghanistan, the court was told, resulted in hundreds of “KIA”.

KIA, Killings in Action, is the US army’s codeword for murder. It’s no wonder Steele didn’t get justice.

Wulfson was found guilty of strangling Steele and acquitted of charges of “penetrating her vagina without her consent”.

He had not been charged with rape.

The jury sentenced Wulfson to only six months of confinement.

Steele’s case is not an aberration within an otherwise humane system.

It reflects the reality of a system that sees the military perpetrate vicious crimes—and then covers them up.

SOCIALIST WORKER EDITOR TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS INTERVIEWED ON HIS NEW BOOK

UPDATING MARXIST THEORY OF IMPERIALISM

New book *Death Rides Out—Imperialism in the 21st Century* is published this week and is a must for socialists grappling with a violent and fast changing world

Camilla Royle: Why did you write the book?

Tomáš Tengely-Evans: Originally I'd planned to write a short introduction to the Marxist theory of imperialism.

I actually went to Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the First World War began, to write it. And the day after I started, Donald Trump launched the war on Iran.

So it turned into a longer book. It does go through the Marxist theory of imperialism but it also tries to apply it and update it for some of the arguments going on today.

The horrors that we're seeing, with genocide in Gaza and other wars around the world, aren't just down to bad policy. It's a question of the capitalist system.

CR: You go back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels but also Vladimir Lenin, Nikolai Bukharin, Rosa Luxemburg, Rudolf Hilferding and others. Why are their ideas still relevant?

TTE: In the run-up to the First World War, Marxists were confronted by a very new situation—rival empires competing to carve up the world.

Lenin, Bukharin, Luxemburg, Hilferding and others were asking what was driving these changes around the world.

There are many things in Lenin and Bukharin that no longer fit, that were over-generalised from specific things that were going on at the time. Luxemburg's theory is different and was shown to be fundamentally



Tomáš Tengely-Evans

flawed in many ways.

But nonetheless, the rational kernel is that imperialism is a global system of competing states. This competition is rooted in the dynamics of capital accumulation, the dynamics of profit making.

This is why what these thinkers say



China projects its economic power and is reshaping the global economy

is incredibly important.

CR: You argue that imperialism is a system of competing states. Some on the left would say that the US is the only great imperial power. Was that a debate you wanted to address?

TTE: Yes. On two levels. When Lenin and Bukharin and others were writing, there were just a handful of advanced capitalist states in the world.

When we look at the world today, it's a world of many advanced capitalist states.

There are still a handful of major imperialist powers at the top. But other states jockey for position and try to assert their interests at every level.

Seeing it in that dynamic way is important, because if you don't, then you end up saying that imperialism is just reducible to US imperialism. Or on the flip side, it's just reducible to Russian imperialism.

Today, there are people who think that China is not an imperialist power.

But if you look at the trade relations China has with the Global South, they replicate the inequalities in trade relations between the West and the Global South.

China is projecting its economic power, has reshaped the global economy and is using that as leverage in international negotiations.

Energy exports from the Middle East—or West Asia—have been reorientated towards China. It clearly is an imperialist state.

The flip side are those people who say that Russia was very bad because it

A Thai cargo ship on fire after being struck by a projectile 11 nautical miles north of Oman earlier this year. The US-Israeli war on Iran has been an abject failure

Nikolai Bukharin was one of the first Marxist theorists of imperialism (above) Trump is finding out about the limits of US power (below)

invaded Ukraine and therefore we have to back Nato or the European Union.

The only way to break out of that is to ask, what's the force that could actually take on imperialism? It's the working class in each country fighting against its own imperialist ruling class.

CR: What debates around Palestine did you want to address?

TTE: There's a big debate about the relationship between the US and Israel. And that's been writ large during the war on Iran.

A section of the Palestine movement sees the war on Iran as an Israeli war against US national interests.

We have to look at what the real relationship is.

Israel remains a watchdog of US imperialism in the Middle East. From the very beginning, imperialism saw the Zionist settler-colonial movement in Palestine as a means of securing control over a key part of the world which had oil reserves and so on.

The British wanted a "loyal little Jewish Ulster" in the Middle East with a population that will not rise up, because it's in its interest to dispossess the Palestinians. Other regimes are more vulnerable because people can rise up.

After the Second World War, you see the US take over from the British and French as the key imperial force in the Middle East.

Israel has been massively funded and propped up by the US because it needs this loyal settler colony.

Iran launches its Mohajer 10 combat drone. It has a range of nearly 1,250 miles

resource imperialism. The Financial Times newspaper did this piece after Trump kidnapped Nicolas Maduro, the president of Venezuela.

It said that there was this new era of resource imperialism where big powers were just trying to nab resources.

But imperialism isn't just about grabbing resources for that power to use itself. The US doesn't actually need the oil in Venezuela.

But it was very convenient to grab that oil so it could starve Cuba, because it wants to stamp its control over the Western hemisphere.

Chinese dominance over the rare earth supply chain is behind Trump saying he wants to grab Greenland.

Rare earths are used in everyday things like your computer screen, but also in armaments and "defence" technologies. They are key to production and key to states being able to compete.

So it's incredibly important for the US to have its own capacity to mine and process them. And Greenland has a wealth of rare earths.

The trouble is that China dominates every level of the supply chain. In the 1980s, it decided that it was going to pour long-term investment into mining but also processing rare earths.

Because of some of the contradictions of globalisation, the US became less able to do this. Even when the US was mining rare earths, it was sending them to China to process, then back to the US.

CR: You pose a choice between socialism or barbarism—what can socialists do to try to end the barbarism of war?

TTE: In the book I try to apply a general approach to specific situations. There's always a tactical question about what you say in each particular war.

Take the war in Iran. I think you have to be for the military defeat of the US, but not for political support of the Iranian regime.

In Iran, there have been workers' strikes since the war began.

Do you stand with the regime on that question? I think, instead, you have to say stop the bombing, but also that US and Israeli bombs don't bring liberation.

There are differences between the case of Palestine and that of Ukraine.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine is a very clear example of colonialism.

You have to support the national liberation struggle of the Palestinians, while saying the armed struggle isn't actually going to defeat imperialism. You have to look towards a broader revolt and revolution within the region.

In Ukraine, of course there's an element of self-defence in that they were invaded by Russia.

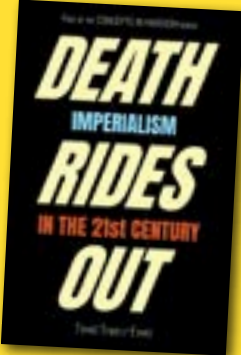
But that's not the dominant characteristic of the war. The dominant characteristic is inter-imperialist rivalry between the West and Russia which has torn Ukraine apart.

The general principle is that the main enemy is at home. You have to fight against your own government, because that's what you can most effectively do. But you have to be part of trying to turn that into a global struggle against the system as a whole.

And there's quite a strong basis to do that, if you think about the size and breadth of the Palestine movement.

But the missing element in all of these things is the power of workers. You saw glimpses of that with strikes in Greece and Italy, with Moroccan dockworkers walking out and shutting down ports to stop the flow of arms and so on.

A key task is to connect the power of these movements against war and genocide to the disruptive power of workers who can take on the war machine. They can take on and stop the profit system, which is ultimately driving what's going on.



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Palestinians return to the rubble of their homes after Israeli bomb attacks

crisis. Iran was supposed to be a war to secure US dominance. It's actually made it weaker and it's caused major rifts and tensions with Israel.

The US just goes over the head of Israel now. Israel's security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, can say "we're a sovereign nation, our policy is not dependent upon the US".

But that's not true. Israel couldn't survive militarily without the US.

CR: You've done new research about the drive to extract rare earths and other technological developments. What role are natural resources playing in imperialism today?

TTE: There is an argument about

However, we've seen the development of regional imperialist powers in recent years, and Israel is one of them.

A regional imperialist is a power that can't compete on a global level for hegemony—for leadership—in the way that the US, Britain, Russia and China do. But it can compete on a regional basis. You see countries striving to become what we would call centres of capital accumulation outside the historic core of capitalism.

Saudi Arabia, for example, no longer just relies on oil.

Israel is an incredibly high-tech economy. It is dependent on military aid, but it's not dependent on economic aid from the US.

This higher level of capitalist development allows it to flex its muscles more.

Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu convinced Trump that he could get a quick victory in Iran and that there would be regime change.

Netanyahu has spread war whenever there's been tension with the US over the genocide.

That tension with the US has existed not because the US cares about the Palestinians, but because they were worried that Israel would destabilise other regimes that are part of the US imperialist infrastructure in the region.

Israel has strained at the leash, but it's always been able to lock in US support during the genocide precisely because the US needs Israel.

What we're seeing now is quite a big

WHEN American revolutionaries declared independence from Britain 250 years ago, they struck a blow against empire and privilege.

The revolution unleashed a wave of resistance that inspired radicals across the world. And it saw the lowest strata of people challenge the powerful to demand a say over how society was run.

By the revolution's end, some 700 buildings had been burnt, 12,000 farms abandoned and hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain destroyed. And hundreds of fighters were dead.

The revolution penetrated every part of society.

It involved small and large landowners, merchants, slave owners, artisans and the fledgling working class. These disparate forces united around the concept of getting rid of the old world and creating a new one.

And they helped sweep away feudal and aristocratic forms of rule. That in turn helped create the conditions for rapid industrialisation.

But the emerging new republic fell far short of the revolution's most democratic aspirations.

Many of those at the head of the revolution owned slaves. And under their rule Indigenous peoples were further dispossessed of their land and massacred. All the while, political power remained concentrated in the hands of the wealthy.

The history of the American Revolution is therefore a story of both rebellion from below and eventual domination from above.

As the Marxist writer Duncan Hallas argued, it was "a rich man's war, but it was not only a rich man's war."

THE 1776 Declaration of Independence is a seminal text and one of the founding documents of the United States of America.

It declared that "all men are created equal" and possess "unalienable rights," including the rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

In a time ruled by lords and kings who claimed to be appointed by God, these were revolutionary slogans.

The declaration's signing marked the moment when the demand for more rights under British rule became a full-blown struggle for independence.

The contradictory class forces in the revolution mean that today its legacy is claimed by some on the right.

For example, Donald Trump supporters chanted "1776" as they stormed the US Capitol building on 6 January 2021.

And former president George W Bush invoked the



ALONZO CHAPPEL (1828-1887) painted the Battle of Long Island in 1858. It depicts rebels holding off the final British attack

SHOULD WE CELEBRATE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION?

For its 250th anniversary, Donald Trump is planning a big party with right wing has-beens for entertainment. But, says Hope Ryan, that should not prevent the left from commemorating the revolution's radical heart

George Washington

language of the revolution to justify his invasion of Iraq in 2003.

But the right's attempt to appropriate the American Revolution ignores the radical forces that made it.

We should always foreground the brutality America inflicted on both Indigenous peoples and those it forced into slavery.

Nevertheless, we must also consider how transformative and progressive the American



The American Revolution inspired all opponents of tyranny

Revolution was for its time.

In the years that followed, the revolution was a source of encouragement for all those fighting back against tyranny.

It inspired the French Revolution of 1789, the Haitian Revolution of 1791 and the anti-colonial struggles in South America in the early 1800s.

And it energised opponents of slavery across the world, including Britain.

The revolution's language

of independence and self-determination was echoed by anti-colonial movements across the world. This included the Vietnamese struggle against French and US domination in the 1950s and 1960s.

No wonder Vladimir Lenin said that the revolution was "one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few."

THE PRELUDE to the revolution was a feeling of intense class resentment, often directed at the British elite but which sometimes spilled over on to the ruling class in America too.

There were tensions within the revolt that pushed people from the lower orders into radical action against those they believed were traitors.

And that implied forming their own organisations and committees to push for genuine and far reaching change.

There was large-scale social upheaval before, during and after the revolution in each of America's 13 colonies—the precursor to today's states.

The notable exception was Virginia. There the slave-owning ruling class was successful in using racism as a divide and rule tactic to separate poor whites and enslaved black people. The result was far less generalised resistance.

But elsewhere, mass resistance saw the destruction of the property of those who aligned themselves with the British.

Ordinary people in Boston, Massachusetts took apart the house of merchant Thomas Hutchinson brick by brick in response to new British taxes.

There was intense debate and discussion about what a new society should look like. In 1776 alone, more than 400 different pamphlets appeared. Meanwhile, in the newspapers, on the streets, in the parks and in the taverns, fierce debates took place.

People whose ideas were until recently conservative and loyal to the crown suddenly became the opposite—they became revolutionaries.

In 1770, a New York radical called "Brutus" denounced wealthy merchants who claimed the right to decide political questions.

"The object of every free government is the public good and all lesser interests yield to it. That of every tyrannical government, is the happiness and aggrandisement of one, or a few," he wrote.

During the revolution many people were won to ideas of human equality and liberty.

In Pennsylvania, for example, a popular revolt from below forced the state to adopt a new constitution. It gave all men the vote and entitled them to make changes that benefitted the lower classes—including price controls.

Yet this experience was not

uniform. The scale of reforms granted depended on the balance of power in each state.

For example, in Maryland, where the planter class had control, there were property qualifications to sit in office that allowed only the wealthiest 10 percent of men to govern.

That same qualification meant just 6 percent of the population could vote.

Towards the close of the revolution, once the British had been ousted in 1783, the major threat to the capitalist class was no longer colonisation—it was popular revolt from below.

Just as in the English and French revolutions, once the old ruling class was defeated and the ground had been cleared for capitalism, the rising bourgeoisie began to repress the struggle from below.

The so-called Founding Fathers—the wealthy leaders of the revolution—did this by reversing some of the gains that had been made in order to consolidate their power.

In the 85 essays that made up the Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay laid out their vision for the new republic. It sought to restrict “a rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project.”

In short, they sought to consolidate power for the richest men in society.

THE RATIFICATION of the Constitution in 1788, which came into effect in 1789, marked the end of the revolutionary period.

It saw an agreement between two dominant forces in American society—the capitalist class in the North and the slave-owning class in the South.

Through the Constitution, a strong central government was created that could tax the population, regulate foreign and interstate trade, raise an army and create a national bank.

All of this was designed to assist the growing capitalist economy.

Yet the Constitution papered over the divisions between the rulers of the North and South.

It was said that “all men are created equal,” but some 20 percent of the population of this new country had been kidnapped abroad and forced into slave labour.

And, during the course of the revolution, further concessions were made to the slave-owning class to keep them onside.

For example, they were gifted an enormous amount of control of the House of Representatives, because enslaved people were counted in the total population, despite them not having a vote.

This alliance of the rulers in North and South remained in place until slavery began to act as a fetter on the capitalist economy. Increasing acrimony between the ruling classes led in 1861 to civil war which threw

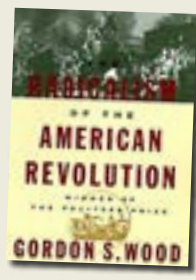


John Singleton Copley's depiction of the death of British major Francis Peirson in 1781 (top) Battle of Trenton by Charles McBarron (above)

READ MORE

● **The Radicalism of the American Revolution** by Gordon S Wood £19

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the country back into chaos.

The North's eventual victory gave its rulers complete control of the country for the first time. But the promise of the revolution—the equality people thought it would bring—did not transpire.

Instead, a system was created that allowed for rapid capitalist growth, resulting in the United States becoming the world's dominant power.

Yet we should not forget that, for its time, the American Revolution acted as a beacon for all those who demanded real equality.

As radical historian Eric Foner argues, the meaning of the Revolution was never settled in 1776.

And in its wake, its promises were repeatedly seized on by the enslaved, workers, women and the oppressed to demand freedoms far beyond what the Founding Fathers intended.

Those revolutionary ideals have yet to be achieved. That's why we must make true the statement that all people are equal and have a fundamental right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Hope Ryan is speaking on the American Revolution at the Marxism 2026 festival



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM with Judy Cox

Why do revolutions need to be 'permanent' to survive?

WHAT CAN revolts in less economically developed countries, like the so-called “Gen Z” movements, achieve? Is socialist revolution even possible in countries where the working class is not the majority?

Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution explains the potential for socialist revolution to develop from mass movements wherever they erupt.

The theory was born out of a huge wave of mass strikes and insurrections that swept the Russian Empire in 1905.

Trotsky was at the centre of events. He was elected chair of the St Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

Socialists threw themselves into the revolution—but they disagreed fiercely over what it could achieve.

Karl Marx had written, “The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future.”

Some seized on this to argue that Russia would have to pass through the same stages as more developed countries before socialism would be possible.

The moderate Russian socialists, the Mensheviks, expected any revolt against the tsar to be led by middle class progressives. They could then establish a liberal government and allow capitalism to flourish.

Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks said the Russian bourgeoisie were too scared of the working class to lead a revolution. They argued for an alliance of peasants and workers to resist tsarist oppression.

Development

But even Lenin argued that socialism would come on the back of capitalist development.

He wrote, “We Marxists should know that there is not, nor can there be, any other path to real freedom for the proletariat and the peasantry, than the path of bourgeois freedom and bourgeois progress.”

By 1906, the revolution

PROTESTERS TAKE part in Nepal's 'Gen Z' revolution

was defeated and Trotsky was in prison, reflecting on the leading role workers had played in 1905.

Trotsky broke decisively from the idea that society must pass through predetermined stages.

He argued, “The privilege of historic backwardness permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specific date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages while at the same time combining a series of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.”

Different countries reached different levels of economic development, but all existed within one world system. Trotsky described this as “combined and uneven development”.

In Russia, industry was built by the Tsarist state in collaboration with foreign capital. There were big concentrations of workers in Moscow and St Petersburg, surrounded by a vast sea of peasants. But, as Trotsky argued, “The proletariat will stand before the peasants as the class which

has emancipated it.”

The working class would not stop at bourgeois democracy but would demand economic changes leading to total emancipation. The revolution would become “permanent”.

It would also need to become permanent in another sense. Russia was less developed and lacked the material basis for socialism.

International

For socialism to survive and develop, it would have to spread internationally.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 vindicated Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which Lenin then supported.

The working class re-established workers' councils and took power under Bolshevik leadership. The new workers' state was based on the majority taking democratic control over what they produced.

Trotsky's theory was also proved negatively. The revolution failed to spread, which fatally undermined the development of socialism from below.

Stalin filled the gap left by a working class ravaged by civil war and famine and isolated from powerful allies abroad.

The theory of permanent revolution revealed the potential for workers to lead socialist revolutions even when they were in a minority in society.

That potential was not realised outside Russia. Next week's column will explore why.

For socialism to survive and develop, it has to spread

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
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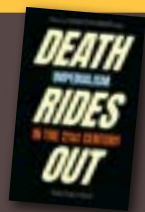
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The tragedy of Spain's defeated revolution—how the left lost

Héctor Puente Sierra told Andy Brown about his book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in the Spanish Civil War*, launched at the Marxism 2026 Festival

Why is the Spanish Civil War so significant to the left?

The 1930s was a decade with many similarities to today.

It was a decade of crisis and social polarisation, a decade in which fascists came to power.

But that's only one side of it. It was also a decade of workers' struggle and revolution.

The outcome of the Second World War—the Holocaust, the terror of Stalinism, these were a result of the defeat of the left. And crucially the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, which was the most profound social revolution since the Russian Revolution of 1917.

While counter-revolution in Russia had strangled the aspirations that had grown there, the Spanish Revolution raised the possibility of a new revolutionary upturn. It was incredibly significant.

Why did the ruling class find the Republican government so threatening?

The first Republican government in 1931 was a coalition of the middle class, liberal Republicans and the Spanish Socialist Labour Party—a social democratic party. Its aim was not to establish socialism, it was to reform the state to make Spanish capitalism fit for purpose. Although it did bring in some left wing reforms.

The government hoped it could do this while reassuring the ruling class that it didn't fundamentally threaten its interests.

Very quickly this coalition unravelled because the ruling class showed incredible hostility to it. It used all the economic weapons at its disposal to try to stop any reform.

The Spanish Revolution raised the possibility of a new revolutionary upturn

What were the political forces that staged the coup against the government in 1936?

The forces that rose up in July 1936—and the general that came to be their leader, Francisco Franco—are often referred to as fascists. In reality, this was a much more complex coalition.

The most important component was the far right element of the army—Franco and his generals.

The Catholic Church played a very important role in legitimising the military coup. This is because the Republic's secularising agenda and rights for women posed a threat to the Church.

The third element of this coalition was the monarchists. The proclamation of the Republic in 1931 had led to the flight of the king and the monarchist right was intent on reestablishing the monarchy.

The final part was the Spanish Falange. This was the only genuinely fascist element. The important thing about this coalition is that because of the diversity of ideology and goals, it was not stable. Resistance could have exploited these differences.

The right expected a quick victory. Why didn't they get one?

What stopped them was resistance by workers, the landless and the rural poor.

They rose up, stormed army barracks, secured weapons and took to the streets to fight.

The Republican government was completely paralysed. It refused to act because it was more afraid of the workers' militancy and revolution.

When the workers asked the government for weapons to defend the Republic, it refused. So, working class people took the initiative. As a result of this, in two-thirds of the country, the coup was stopped. This is what sent a failed coup into a long and bloody civil war.

How did the resistance change between its early and later stages?

Where the coup was defeated, the Republican state was shattered. A process of social revolution got underway and working class people began to shape the new society.

In the Aragon countryside, they made huge advances because

THE REVOLUTION inspired men and women to fight against the rise of fascism

people believed they were fighting to establish and defend a new social order.

In the later stages, a popular front government was installed. The strategy of this popular front was dominated by reassuring international powers—particularly France, Britain and the US—that Republican Spain was not a threat to capitalism.

That meant toning down demands and suffocating the social revolution.

What role did Stalin and the International Brigades play?

The International Brigades are an inspiring example of internationalism. But that's not the whole story.

The International Brigades were established at the initiative of the Communist International, the Comintern.

Initially, Stalin's Soviet Union reacted cautiously towards the Republican government and the Spanish Communist Party. Its priority was to secure a military

alliance with French and British imperialism against Nazi Germany.

The Comintern decided to organise the Brigades only when it became clear that, without international support the Republic would be defeated very quickly.

But the Brigades were not an army of Soviet agents. The

Brigades were primarily volunteers from workers movements in the name of internationalism and to fight fascism.

What was the role of anarchists and of the Poup?

The anarchist movement in the Spanish state in the 1930s is the historical high point of anarchism.

It was the leadership of the CNT trade union federation.

Workers joined it because they were drawn to its militant tactics.

The Poup—Workers' Party of Marxist Unification—were revolutionary socialists. They were anti-Stalinists and were very influential in Catalonia. The Poup grew during the civil war, but it

still had very limited influence.

The Poup and the CNT in the revolution were allies, in that both these forces stood for social revolution. However, there was a big difference between the two on the question of power.

The Poup argued that to unleash the revolutionary warfare needed to win the war and deepen the social revolution, workers had to take state power.

The anarchists, because of their opposition to authority and the state, were completely paralysed by this question.

They decided not to take power when they were presented with their chance. Instead, they ended up collaborating in the reconstruction of bourgeois power in the rebuilt Republican state.

Could the left have offered a viable alternative?

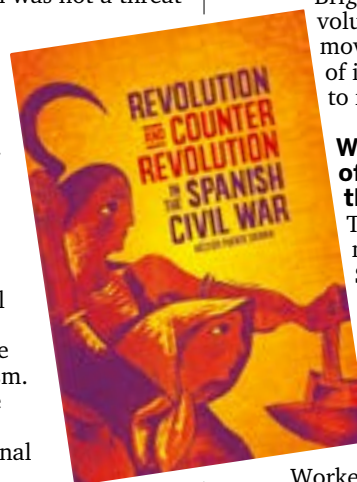
The only alternative was the one the Poup put forward. This was based on the idea of establishing a democratic worker's state that could coordinate and centralise all the resources and use the methods of revolutionary warfare.

The militias were making advances during the early stages of the war. And that indicated that revolutionary methods could be effective. Unfortunately, those were not the methods did not spread.

By 1936, the Spanish state was caught between socialism and barbarism.

There was no middle road between the two—and those who tried to pursue that strategy, ultimately paved the way for the victory of barbarism.

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in the Spanish Civil War by Héctor Puente Sierra is available at bookmarksbookshop.co.uk for £15



IN BRIEF

Eastenders fight pension cuts

UNISON UNION members in Tower Hamlets, east London, are set to strike over pension cuts. The workers are administrators and housing officers.

Management wants to move workers onto a pension scheme that would leave them thousands of pounds worse off in retirement.

Some 100 percent voted to strike on a 95 percent turnout.

Unless the bosses back down in talks this week, the strike will go ahead from Wednesday to Friday this week and next week.

The workers were told that their current pension scheme would be protected when they transferred from Tower Hamlets Council to East End Homes in 2002.

The changes could force them to work for longer to maintain a retirement income they thought was secure.

●Join picket lines outside EEH Head Office, 3 Resolution Plaza, London, E1 6PS, from 8.30am

Station workers have had enough

AVANTI WEST Coast train station workers at Manchester Piccadilly station struck last Saturday and plan to strike again this Saturday.

Management has failed to address their concerns over a series of anonymous targeted complaints against a group of the workers.

RMT union regional organiser Steve Shaw said, "Our members at Manchester Piccadilly have had enough of what they see as a heavy-handed and unjust process based on anonymous allegations and a fishing expedition to find grounds for disciplinary action."

Workers are determined to defend their colleagues and send a message that workplace investigations must be conducted fairly.

AQA strikers plan summer of action

WORKERS AT Britain's largest Exam Board, AQA, are preparing for a summer of action. Over a million students sit AQA exams every year, with 1,400 workers processing more than half of all GCSE and A Level qualifications.

Laura, a member of the Unison AQA branch, told Socialist Worker that strikes scheduled for this week had to be called off. But there are plans to escalate their fight for pay restoration.

"July is our best chance at winning. I can't understate how big a disruption even a single day of strike causes.

"AQA has a strict deadline so that people can get their exam results on time. If they miss these they can be hit with a massive fine from Ofqual," said Laura.

"We need to increase the pressure on them."

EDUCATION

Camden TAs draw a line in the sand

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs) in Camden, north London, are showing how workers can fight back against low pay.

TAs at two primary schools in Camden, north London, took to picket lines last week in their battle to be raised from level 3 to level 4 on the pay scale.

The Unison union members at Richard Cobden and Primrose Hill schools were out together for the second time in what has become a significant dispute with Camden council.

They walked out on Monday and were set to continue striking until Friday and Thursday, respectively.

However, due to the red alert heat warning, only Primrose Hill primary school remained open by the end of the week.

Despite soaring temperatures, the spirits on the picket line were untempered.

TAs received support from other workers at the school.

An early years practitioner told Socialist Worker, "I wanted to show the strikers my support and stand with them on the picket line because I want them to win.

"They are so important to the running of the school. Teachers can't do their job without them," she added.

Other schools in the borough have already been regraded.



Teaching assistants walked out

PHOTO: GUY SMALLMAN

One TA on the picket line said that their school's refusal to do the same made them feel "devalued".

Teaching assistants support children with specialist educational needs and disabilities (Send) and help deliver lessons.

Skill

"It takes skill to do the work we do every day in classrooms. The idea that agency staff can come in and do as good a job as us is very disrespectful," she said.

Schools have faced years of underfunding. Workloads have risen and TAs are asked to do more with less pay.

Another TA told Socialist Worker, "I've worked here for 20 years. What I would have liked to have seen is for the headteacher to back us.

"Why isn't he going to the council and trying to figure

out a way to fix this?" she asked.

She said a proposal to get by with agency staff, "misunderstands how best to support and educate children.

"Having permanent staff is good for the children because you build trust and relationships. We have the experience and understand their needs."

If the TAs win, it can have a wider impact. Every victory against cuts strengthens the confidence of other workers to fight back.

That is why solidarity matters. Parents, teachers and local residents all have a stake in defending the TAs who help keep schools running.

Camden teaching assistants are drawing a line in the sand. Stand with the workers and help build support for the strike.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Stop Exeter jobs massacre

THE UNIVERSITY of Exeter is among the latest institutions to announce a wave of mass lay-offs that will damage it beyond repair.

The university told over 500 workers last week that they are at risk of redundancy.

Overwhelmingly, these workers are based in the humanities and social sciences. Their loss would pose an existential threat to teaching in English, history and politics and unique courses like Kurdish studies.

Last week, workers faced the excruciating wait to find out whether they would get an email telling them they are at risk.

The UCU union says the cuts are unnecessary. Exeter has never had a budget deficit and bosses' pay is out of control. The union branch says it will ballot members for strikes.

Meanwhile, UCU members at Goldsmiths, in London, are taking on management's plans for cuts with an ongoing indefinite strike.

Picket line activities were called off last week due to the extreme heat but are back on this week.

Workers at the University of Nottingham are also set to strike until the end of July. And at the University of Edinburgh and at London Metropolitan University, UCU members are boycotting marking and assessment in opposition to job cuts.

At the Glasgow Caledonian University, EIS-ULA union members are set to strike this Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and for further dates in August and September.

The workers overwhelmingly voted for action to demand the university rules out compulsory job cuts.

Branch secretary Nick McKerrrell said, "The proposed loss of 100 jobs at Glasgow Caledonian University and senior management's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies has provoked fury across campus.

"On top of that a costed plan put forward by trade unions to avoid these cuts was rejected out of hand."

●Sign the petition against planned redundancies at Exeter, tinyurl.com/Exetercuts
By Camilla Royle

FURTHER EDUCATION

Nationwide ballot planned

COLLEGE WORKERS in the UCU union are set to ballot for action across England from October.

They face stagnating pay and rising workloads that have led to an exodus of workers from the sector.

There is also a political attack from the far right. Reform UK's mayor of Lincolnshire wants to scrap English for speakers of other

languages—Esol—courses.

The union's further education committee agreed last Friday to start a ballot across colleges over pay, workload and national bargaining.

The aggregated ballot means all colleges could walk out together.

An alternative proposal to delay the ballot for a year was not successful.

SCHOOLS

Show your support for these London school workers on the picket lines

NEU UNION members at St Paul's Way Trust School, in Tower Hamlets, east London, walked out on Monday in a dispute over a proposed restructure.

Bosses' plans would result in pay cuts and redundancies, as well as an increased workload for teachers.

In the morning, there were more than 80 people on the picket line.

The pickets chanted "No more cuts, no more lies, education must rise!"

Since the union has taken action, its membership has already risen to 130.

Local MP Apsana Begum and NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede, both brought solidarity to the striking workers on the picket line.

Some workers stayed for a second picket, in the



Apsana Begum and Daniel Kebede joined strikers

afternoon, which was held because the school was hosting a science conference.

Strikers held up signs reading, "No to using teacher pay rises and inflation as an excuse for the

black hole."

The workers will be out next Tuesday and Wednesday, with a further three days of strikes to follow.

●Offer them solidarity on their

picket line at St Paul's Way Trust School, 125 St Paul's Way, London E3 4FT, from 8am

■EDUCATORS AT the Connaught School for Girls, in Waltham Forest, east London, have suspended a strike planned for 1-3 July.

The educators are in a long running dispute with management over pay and conditions.

Three workers at the school have been made redundant and NEU activists at the school have been facing victimisation.

The workers have been out on strike for several weeks since 21 April.

The strikes have been called off because progress has been made in talks with management. More strikes are still on the agenda if talks fail.

■NEU UNION members at Woodfield, a special educational needs and disabilities (Send) school in Brent, west London, are set to return to the picket lines on 2-3 July.

They've already struck this year for 13 days, with eight further days to follow.

The dispute rose because of management's move to "fire and rehire" support workers at the school.

Compass Learning Partnership has made 47 lead learning assistants redundant.

Management are trying to force the workers to accept a reduction in their working week of 3.5 hours. This would represent a £4,000 pay cut.

●Bring solidarity to Woodfield School, Glenwood Ave, London NW9 7LY, from 7.30am

LABORATORIES

Cancer workers hit back at bosses for better pay

by CAMILLA ROYLE

WORKERS AT the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) began two weeks of continuous strike this week. The Unite union members are demanding a better pay deal.

Bosses removed their incremental pay scales in 2018, meaning pay has lagged behind the cost of living. The workers have already been on strike for nine days.

Close to 100 strikers rallied at the ICR's Sutton site in south London on Tuesday to lobby the board of directors of the institute.

Striker Robert told Socialist Worker that the workers have had lots of support, including from people affected by cancer.

He said, "We want to be in that building fighting cancer. It upsets me that we are being misrepresented as greedy."

"I just want a fair pay system that rewards people for their dedication and loyalty."

Rejected

He explained that the action has already had an effect. After the first two days of strikes, bosses came back with a new offer. The union branch rejected it.

Liliana told Socialist Worker she would like bosses



STRIKING WORKERS at the Institute of Cancer Research

to address the gap caused by the loss of the incremental pay scales. She said, "We are not asking them to address that this year, but it's only going to get bigger."

Paul said, "In real terms we have lost 16 percent of our pay. A lot of people are struggling with the cost of living."

"A new CEO comes in and gets a 40 percent pay rise—it's adding insult to injury. At the end of the day it's about how much you are appreciated by the people who run the institute."

He explained that bosses have already backed down. They threatened to move the lowest paid workers to

a worse pension scheme and to start charging for parking. Both of these plans have now been dropped.

Postgraduate researcher Joe told Socialist Worker he was on the picket line because of the lack of pay progression.

Joe also said that the canteen no longer serving hot food was like "a slap in the face".

"It's not unusual to see people working here until 8pm. We are not paid overtime. The least they could do is offer hot food."

Helen from estates and facilities has worked at the ICR for nearly 23 years. She said it is becoming harder to

negotiate a fair pay package, as bosses make decisions without consulting workers.

"We feel really passionate about working here," she told Socialist Worker.

"But we've had enough of senior staff being paid more money and the poorest paid members of staff being paid even less. I feel it's time to make a stand."

Workers are waiting for bosses to come to the table with a new offer.

Strikers said they thought management expected a small strike and expected to be able to ride it out. "They are hoping it fizzles out. But I don't think it is going to fizzle out," said Paul.

HEALTH ROUND-UP

Strikes against low pay in Manchester and Leeds

WORKERS IN hospital operating theatres in Greater Manchester struck for 24 hours last week and were set to walk out again on Thursday for 48 hours.

There were strikes at Salford Royal, Rochdale Infirmary, Royal Oldham and Fairfield General hospitals.

The action by Unison members is part of a long-running dispute centred on overtime payments at the giant NHS trust, the Northern Care Alliance.

Nurses, clinical support workers and housekeepers are furious that bosses have slashed their overtime pay.

And they are demanding that staff working bank shifts—casual shifts that cover staffing gaps—for the NHS Professionals agency are paid the proper rate.

A similar dispute at the trust involves Unison members working in clinical care, and it is possible that in the future both groups of workers could strike together. Workers in other departments have contacted the union saying they want to join the fight too.

Operating theatre workers at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on Monday began the second week of a 14-day strike.

The Unison union members are angry at being paid at the band 2 rate—the lowest on the NHS pay scale—despite performing many clinical duties.

Unison branch chair John Ingleson told Socialist Worker, "Our members are upset and frustrated, but still highly determined."

"They see colleagues in neighbouring hospitals paid as a Band 3."

"But here in Leeds where more complex surgery is performed, our members remain bizarrely on Band 2."

"They only get Band 2, while doing Band 3 work—and nobody can legitimately explain that contradiction."

OPERATING THEATRE workers across Bedfordshire walked out for two days last week also in a fight over overtime payments.

Nurses, practitioners and surgery staff in the Unison union mounted picket lines at hospitals in Bedford, Luton and Dunstable.

A LIVELY group of around 50 health workers at East London Foundation NHS Trust demonstrated outside the bosses offices against the compulsory redundancy of Mark Dunne, the most senior Unite union rep there.

The demo was a great show of support by staff for Mark.

A Unite member on the demonstration explained, "Cuts have been devastating across the Trust. Whole wards have been closed, and teams decimated."

"We're scarcely able to deal with mental health emergencies now."

Trade union victimisations in the NHS are increasing.

Unite are now in official dispute with the trust.

Dr Kambiz Boomla

● Sign the petition [tinyurl.com/EastLdnNHS](https://www.tinyurl.com/EastLdnNHS)

● Day of action on Thursday 23 July, details to be announced.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Trade unionists debate how to take on the AI bosses

by CAMILLA ROYLE in Manchester

SOME 100 trade unionists and activists gathered in Manchester last Saturday for a one-day conference, "This Is Not Inevitable—Standing up to AI and Big Tech".

The event was co-hosted by the Campaign against Climate Change and the Greater Manchester Climate Justice Coalition.

It formed part of the trade union year of climate action.

Speakers discussed the use of AI in the workplace to monitor workers and increase workloads and its potential to lead to mass layoffs.

Shireen Asaw from United Tech and Allied Workers, a part of the CWU

union, told the conference, "Our people are using AI and building it and increasingly being told that they are being replaced by it."

However, she warned against the industry hype that tells workers that machines have "become conscious" and are taking over livelihoods.

Instead, she said it is being used as a convenient excuse by bosses to make decisions about job cuts that they wanted to make anyway.

"AI doesn't 'think', it predicts. It's very impressive but it is not a magical machine," she argued.

She explained that behind every AI system there are still workers monitoring its outputs and

training the AI. Often the work is outsourced to parts of the world with lower wages and fewer labour protections. The workers are not so much replaced, but hidden.

Owen Espley from the Global Action Plan campaign group said that a typical data centre consumes the same electricity as 100,000 households.

Despite the green claims of bosses, it is reliant on fossil fuels.

Sheffield based resident doctor Rory Gibson discussed the campaign to keep Palantir out of the NHS.

The tech giant's tools are used by the Israeli military and by Ice. Laurence Bouvard from the Equity union outlined

how actors and performers had opposed the non-consensual use of their voice and likeness by threatening to strike.

They were inspired by strikes by the Sag-Aftra union in the US.

Participants at the conference discussed whether to oppose all AI or whether some uses can be positive.

Researcher Anne Alexander introduced her talk by referring to herself as an AI abolitionist and said that the tech is incredibly destructive.

But Shireen argued that it could replace dangerous and repetitive work.

"Trade unionists are not against technology," she said. "But it's not neutral and reflects the values of the people who own it."

MANUFACTURING

Scarborough coach builders strike for first time in 30 years

AROUND 400 Unite union members at Scarborough's Alexander Dennis coach factory—formerly known as Plaxtons—struck last Thursday over the company's 4 percent pay offer.

The coach builders are out on strike again from Monday of this week.

The first industrial action at the site for nearly 30 years followed a ballot that saw 81 percent vote in favour of strikes on an impressive 80 percent turnout.

Prices have risen by over 35 percent since 2021, while wages at Alexander Dennis have increased by only 15 percent.

It leaves workers with about a fifth less spending power than five years ago.

Unite convenor Alex Sheader said, "The

company's not negotiated with us at all since November. The membership have had enough."

"The cost of living crisis means we have no choice but to take action."

The picket line was good-humoured, lively and well-attended, with strikers getting enthusiastic support from passing traffic.

Striker Kyle Myerscough told Socialist Worker he was confident about the outcome. "I can't see the company winning," he said. "They know they're wrong and it's just a matter of time."

Unite regional officer Dan Stephens agreed the mood was solid. "There are no wavering voices. What we need now is the company to come back with some movement and guarantees."

John Atkinson

ISRAEL WANTS MORE KILLINGS

by JUDE MCKECHNIE

ISRAEL'S LEADERS have declared that the terror state will indefinitely occupy parts of Lebanon, Syria and Gaza.

But, far from being a sign of strength, these occupations show the political isolation of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the failure of the war against Iran.

Netanyahu told troops last week, "We dominate southern Lebanon—we do not intend to withdraw."

Defence minister Israel Katz said the military would "remain in the security zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza without any time limit". He said that Israel opposed withdrawal from Lebanon "despite all the pressures that exist and those that are yet to come".

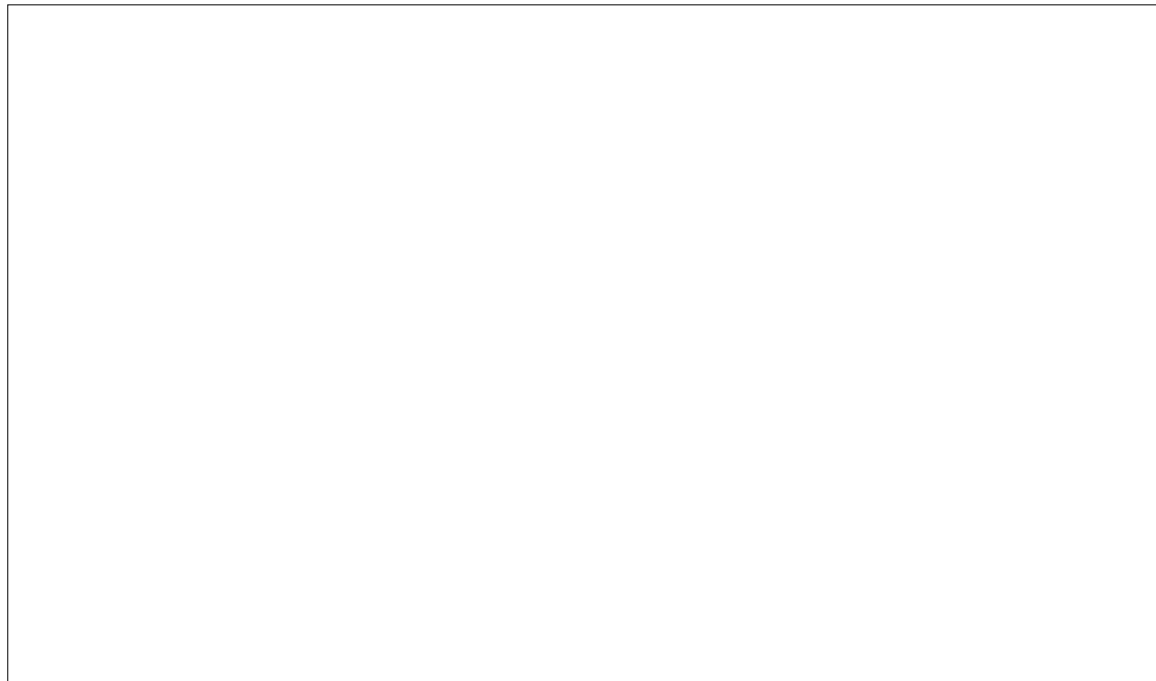
Katz threatened to strike Iran "with full force" if it attacked Israel over its activities in Lebanon.

The occupations are designed to derail negotiations between the US and Iran. As part of the ceasefire, the Iranian regime demanded that Israel stop its assaults across the region.

The US and Israel's war on Iran has been a calamity. Netanyahu convinced Trump that the Iranian regime would quickly collapse after they launched their assault in February.

When a swift victory didn't come—and shockwaves ripped through the global economy—Trump started looking for an off-ramp.

Israel wants to scupper the deal by ramping up its attacks in Lebanon. It sees a prolonged war as a way of weakening its regional rival.



MOHAMMED QADDOURA holds his brother in law's wedding suit after an Israeli air strike killed him

But while Israel can strain at its leash, it remains dependent on US imperialism.

Revealed

A new book published last week revealed one of the tense calls between US and Israeli officials when Trump was pushing the 20-point "peace plan" for Gaza last year.

"I'm tired of your behaviour, I have done everything to protect you and you'd better move forward with this. Everybody's sick of you, Bibi," he told Netanyahu. "All the Jews are

sick of you.

"Even the two Jews on this call are sick of you," he said, pointing to Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff.

After Israel bombed Qatar—which was hosting peace talks—in September last year, the US put its foot down and issued an ultimatum to reach a deal.

Its plan was to allow Israel to mount a colonial land grab and turn Gaza and the wider region into a high-tech zone of profit-making dominated by the US.

The situation in besieged Gaza remains catastrophic.

Israeli airstrikes last weekend targeted displacement tents and areas where civilians were gathering. They murdered eight Palestinians and wounded 20 others.

The Palestinian health ministry in Gaza last week announced that the number of Palestinians killed since the ceasefire took effect last year had surpassed 1,000 people. Of those, it says 265 were children.

The announcement came after a new report by the United Nations Human Rights Council said that Israeli forces had "deliberately" targeted Palestinian children in

Gaza and the West Bank.

Meanwhile, there has been no agreement on how to implement the second phase of the "ceasefire".

This would see Israeli soldiers withdraw from Gaza on the condition that the Hamas resistance group disarms.

Aggressor

But why should the Palestinians lay down their weapons when Israel, the aggressor, does not?

Under the ceasefire agreement, Israeli forces withdrew to a demarcation line, known as the "yellow line". Israel has used this line to mark the area within the Gaza Strip where Palestinians can't go.

However, in breach of the "ceasefire", the area has been expanded multiple times through the placement of yellow blocks.

Since last October, Israel has further entrenched its presence in the Palestinian territory and now controls 64 percent of the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu said he told the IDF to take over 70 percent of Gaza. And, he said that there was "no room for two states" between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Jordan.

Israel wants to make Gaza uninhabitable for Palestinians. As it continues to heavily restrict aid for the starving population, we must continue to take to the streets to demand sanctions on Israel.

And let's pile pressure on Andy Burnham to demand the Labour government breaks with its support for genocide.

Join the national demonstration for Palestine in London, Sat 18 July. Go to www.stopwar.org.uk for more details

VENEZUELA

Rage on the streets in wake of poor earthquake response

VENEZUELANAS ARE angry at the government response to two earthquakes that devastated much of the country.

The earthquakes killed at least 1,400 people and injured over 3,000 after hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

Some 50,000 people are missing, with friends and families desperately

hoping they will be found under the rubble.

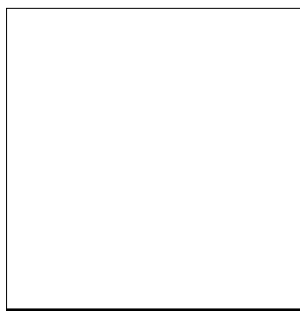
The government requires that rescuers and volunteers obtain a permit to enter affected areas, causing significant delays in finding people.

Government spokesperson Jorge Rodríguez told rescuers that they have to go "in an orderly manner". In

Tanaguarena local protests forced soldiers to put down their weapons and join rescue operations.

The scale of the devastation results from the malign influence of US imperialism and the social collapse that marked Nicolas Maduro's rule.

Even before the earthquake hit, services were at breaking point.



Contempt—Jorge Rodríguez

Maduro has turned to repression to stifle opposition, including social media restrictions.

And, some reports suggest that corruption in Venezuela has damaged power and water supplies and hospital facilities.

The state has abandoned Venezuelans. As they struggle to get care for their loved ones they find

that there is no ambulance or medical workers to help.

Our task is to demand an end to the imperialist plunder that has deepened this unnatural disaster. And to oppose the US right who will want to use the chaos to extend their power and influence.

A longer version of this article is available online at socialistworker.co.uk



Socialists discuss resistance at Marxism Festival 2025

PICTURE: DAVE GILCHRIST

Socialists are organising to fight at Marxism 2026

More than 3,000 socialists including Hasan Piker, Yasemin Acar and Jeremy Corbyn to debate the way forward for Palestine, climate and the fight against the far right, says **Jess Walsh**

HATE CAPITALISM and want to change the world? You'll be in the right place at Marxism Festival this weekend.

Protein Studios in Shoreditch, east London, will be a hub of debate, discussion and organising as over 3,000 people come to our festival.

We're proud to welcome headline speakers and prominent voices for Palestinian liberation. They include Yasemin Acar, organiser of the Global Sumud Flotilla, and Palestinian journalist Ahmed Alnaouq.

US political commentator Hasan Piker, who was banned from Britain for standing with the Palestinian resistance, will join a special panel to discuss repression of the Palestine movement. He will speak alongside Jeremy Corbyn, Yanis Varoufakis, Kwabena Devonish, Ben Jamal, the Filton 25 and more.

And Bobby Vylan—who was targeted after he chanted, “Death, death to the IDF” at Glastonbury last year—is another headline speaker.

We will discuss and analyse Donald Trump's Iran crisis, growing inter-imperialist rivalry, the rise of regional imperial powers and debate where next for the anti-imperialist movement.

We will reflect on the far right's growing dominance and consider the potential new faces and forms of modern fascism and debate how we fight back.

This year we are excited to welcome speakers from across the climate movement.

Author Alyssa Battistoni will be discussing her book *Free Gifts*, and the irreconcilability between capitalism and nature.



Marxism will be a hub of debate

Matt Huber will offer a Marxist critique of degrowth. M V Ramana, Linda Pentz Gunter and Camilla Royle will be putting forward the case against nuclear energy.

And John Bellamy Foster, perhaps one of the most famous Marxist ecologists, will explore Marx's ecology in the age of AI.

Beyond mass rallies of hundreds, workshops will drill down into history and theory to give socialists the tools they need to understand and change the world.

Crisis

In Britain and around the world, the political centre ground faces a crisis of legitimacy as it struggles to resolve the deepening and interpenetrating crises of capitalism.

With the departure of Keir Starmer only two years after his general election victory,

Britain is about to have its seventh prime minister in ten years.

New forces of the left and far right, Zack Polanski's Green Party and Nigel Farage's racist Reform UK, are growing as the two-party system collapses. And Labour is looking to “soft left” chameleon Andy Burnham to reverse its decline.

Marxist analysis allows us to look beyond the immediate drama of mainstream politics and understand the deeper forces shaping today's crises. Rather than treating crises as

isolated, Marxism helps us identify the underlying dynamics driving them.

From climate breakdown to war and genocide, to economic instability and the erosion of democratic rights, these are expressions of a deeper crisis in capitalism.

At a time when mainstream politics offers only managed decline, reaction or denial, the case for revolutionary politics and organisation becomes more urgent.

Against this backdrop, we argue that another world is not only necessary but possible.

Emancipation

Marxism is more than a tool of analysis—it is the theory and practice of working class self-emancipation.

From the general strikes for Palestine in Italy and Greece, dockers' action in Morocco to the “economic shutdown” in Minneapolis, we've seen glimpses of the unique power of workers to take on the system.

And, if you're inspired by taking part in the festival, you should get organised with other revolutionary socialists.

The Socialist Workers Party is not the finished article. But it is a necessary political instrument if you want to deepen resistance into a bigger confrontation against capitalism and its horrors.

Let's get organised together and fight for socialism.



Jess Walsh

'I BECAME A REVOLUTIONARY LAST YEAR' WHAT HAPPENED AFTER I JOINED THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Judy Cox spoke to socialists who joined the Socialist Workers Party at Marxism 2025 about what joining the revolutionaries has meant for them

'We have nothing to lose and everything to gain'

Gwen from London

I WAS at Marxism 2025 for two days. I remember the speech Andrew Feinstein gave when he announced Your Party—it was so exciting.

The festival made me aware of the interconnected nature of so many different struggles I was passionate about. I didn't have the analysis that it was the framework of capitalism—I had seen these struggles in isolation from each other.

Being in a room with so many people with the energy to fight was inspiring. I had just left school and I felt it was such a contrast with being in a space that stripped you of a sense of self.

I loved sociology A Level. The Marxist thinkers were always the ones I remembered because they were the only ones who knew what they were talking about.

But at Marxism I saw people not just in an academic context, but acting on their ideas. All these people were acting on their Marxist analysis.

The Marxism taught at school was sanitised and

shrunk down. It made me angry that I hadn't been able to study those ideas.

Women Against The Far Right locally has been very important, but I do as many campaigns as possible. Student work was important too. We have a growing Socialist Workers Student Society (SWSS) group.

The weekly Finsbury Park campaign stall where we sell Socialist Worker helps us get to know people locally. It is fun to politicise any situation, a good way to test yourself and challenge your ideas.

If I have questions, I know comrades will be eager to help me answer them.

The biggest pull for me was the Palestinian cause. I was opposed to the genocide, but I saw it in a tunnel-vision way. I was solely focused on a moralistic perspective. Marxism widened my understanding of imperialism.



Becoming a member of the SWP gave me the language to describe reality. It made me realise that the gap between what you feel and how capitalism explains our material life takes away our power.

Recognising and understanding why and how the world is structured the way it is made me feel less lost and hopeless.

We need more young people who think that caring is cool and who are fighting for the world we all deserve to live in, free of oppression. We have nothing to lose and literally everything to gain.

'Practice makes political arguments a lot stronger'

Dave from Edinburgh

BEFORE I joined, I was on the left, but I didn't have a coherent ideology and I wasn't active.

I saw a Marxism poster and I booked up. I thought it might be a dry, academic event but it was very different.

I found out it was organised by the SWP and I met comrades from Edinburgh. I asked them, how does it work? What



is the strategy? How can we make a difference?

I was not quite ready to join but I went to a meeting in Edinburgh. There was a theoretical discussion and then so many people talking about working in the unions, the Palestine movement, anti-racism and organising on campuses and I thought—yes.

I have been very active, especially in Stand Up To Racism (SUTR)—I'm on the organising team. I have attended lots of historic protests, including one against Tommy Robinson in London and others around Britain.

I went from being a bit hesitant on marches to leading the chants and organising trips to fight the fascists in Falkirk.

I have learned a lot about socialism and Marxism. I have taken part in a lot of interesting discussions and there are lots of educational materials, books and



not defending opinions' Maia from London

Last year was my first Marxism. I had heard about it, and of the SWP, but I never interacted because I felt it was quite intimidating. I am a scientist, I had no background talking about politics except with my family and friends.

When you talk about politics, it is often arguments about fundamental things—women's rights or supporting strikes. I always had to defend my opinion, but didn't have the context or information to back up my opinions.

I went to Marxism to educate myself. I attended a series of talks which were very interesting, and then I joined at the closing rally.

I felt everyone was easy to talk to and excited to talk.

The goal of conversation was to find the best analysis, not defending existing opinions.

I started coming to weekly meetings and feeling more confident. I didn't really intend to be very active and there was never any pressure.

But theory and practice are interwoven, so if you go to meetings and think about issues, it is inevitable that you do things and begin to organise.

It came very naturally and I felt very supported in doing that.

I started getting involved after Marxism. There were protests outside refugee hotels and the flag campaigns, so I was organising counter-demos with SUTR. That fed into interacting with the community and the mosque.

I really started to get involved and started UCL SWSS group. I was thinking, where are the students? Because I know they care. I wanted to share my great experiences of the SWP with them.

We have great new comrades at the university now. It is very exciting that we have found each other. Hopefully, more students will join at this Marxism.

'People were making sense for the first time'

Jeet from London

I found Marxism 2025 really good. It was a real introduction to left wing spaces—it felt like people were making sense for the first time. I had all these issues, but all the solutions I heard felt inadequate.

People were talking about the labour theory of value and what we should do in a revolution—it was a breath of fresh air.

For the first time, I felt like I could talk to an old white man and I knew they would be chill and not be a racist.

Within two days I joined the party.

The first book I finished reading was on Marxism and women's liberation, that really piqued my interest. And Trotsky's Fascism and How to Fight It, I loved the way it was written. It felt like you were just talking to a guy.

I have been learning and sharpening my understanding. The SWP has been really good for my confidence.

I have plans to build up the stall and do more book launches.

I have been involved in SUTR locally and in London. It is enjoyable to see things being done.

Before I thought it would be impossible to get people to go from Bristol to London for a march against racism, but when you see people you met on a stall turn up and get on the coach—that's so satisfying.

'Being in the party has really boosted my confidence'

Millie from Liverpool

I was in a different party but didn't align with their politics. I bumped into some comrades in a pub, we had a long chat and they told me about Marxism.

I really enjoyed it—I got a real sense of belonging. There was such a nice atmosphere and the politics felt right, so I decided to join.

Our party speaks out on oppression in a way that doesn't patronise or degrade people. It showed me how being clear about politics helps to convince other people and brings them hope.

I have learnt so much about how to speak to people in accessible and convincing ways.

Being in the party has really boosted my confidence—now I go on the megaphone at the front of demos.

It helps me get my rage out too. My worst fear was public speaking. All throughout

university, I was doing presentations and I could never finish them. And now I am the one doing the meetings. I couldn't have imagined that even a year ago that I would be at this point.

We never pressure people to join. We make a positive atmosphere that encourages people.

'It's about finding the best analysis,

Thousands of socialists from across the world flock to London to thrash out key issues—from past struggles to fighting back today (above) Delane (below left) and Millie (below right) joined at last year's festival



the paper. And, of course, it is important to discuss politics with people.

We are part of a global effort, you feel you are one of many and that together we are making a difference. On smaller protests, individual contributions are more visible and you do make a real difference.

I think opinions on politics are stronger when you have examples of what you have done. Practice makes political arguments a lot stronger.

There is a lot of work to do, a lot of things to fix, but I am a happier person now. Despite the horrible world we live in, you feel so much better if you are trying to do something about it. And if you meet people who care about the world and are fighting for positive change.

'Having knowledge isn't enough—you have to be involved'

Delane

from Bristol

Me and a friend saw Marxism posters, we saw Jeremy Corbyn



was speaking and we thought anything else would be a bonus.

It was such an inspiring event. Up until then my perception of the left was that it's a commentariat just posting stuff online, or very parliamentary.

But at Marxism I saw rooms of people engaged in topics—no one was on their phones.

Some recruiter came up and asked if we wanted to join and we said we may as well.

When I moved to Bristol I thought—new city, new opportunity to meet like-minded people. I went to a meeting and it was fun and very friendly.

I'm black and the energy in the SWP meeting was different from other groups.

The SWP branch was a very warm and inviting place for someone like me.

I came along more and got involved in local protests. I have developed politically but having knowledge is not enough—you have to be involved in protests

I organise the book stall for my branch. We didn't really have one, but we had an event called Marxism in a Day. I ran the book stall there and it went really well. People who bought books were open to discussions and to joining.

HATE FASCISM, WAR AND CAPITALISM?

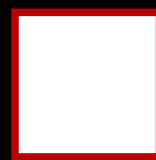
**Oppose racism, Islamophobia
and attacks on refugees?**



**Support Palestine and oppose
imperialism?**



**Want to smash Nigel Farage
and Tommy Robinson?**



**Oppose sexism and the assault
on trans+ people?**



**Want a socialist alternative to
the Labour Party?**



YES? Then you want to be in the
Socialist Workers Party



socialistworker.co.uk/join-swp



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