



WHY YOU SHOULD BACK THIS STRIKE

Workers at the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) develop world-class treatments—but they're forced to fight for pay justice. They spoke to Camilla Royle about their battle >>Pages 8&9

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SPAIN CRISIS BURNHAM PROMISES 'RELENTLESS' CRACKDOWN ON REFUGEES



WE NEED RELENTLESS ANTI-RACISM

DON'T LET FAR RIGHT EXPLOIT REFUGEE CRISIS >>Pages 2&3 and 4

SOUTH ASIA

Why are Kashmiris rising up?

A MASS movement of thousands of people in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir are demanding greater democratic rights in the midst of a rigged election for the regional parliament.

Yuri Prasad explains why they are protesting, how Kashmir was divided and why socialists argue for Kashmiri people to determine their own future.

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THEORY



Anton Jäger's Hyperpolitics

POLITICS IS everywhere—in our consumer choices, online echo chambers and culture wars.

But it can also feel like politics is nowhere tangible.

Judy Cox reviews a new book by Anton Jäger, *Hyperpolitics—Extreme Politicisation Without Political Consequences*, that seeks to understand this phenomenon.

It has clearly struck a chord with some on the left.

>>Pages 10&11

MIDDLE EAST

Major escalation in US-Iran war

THE US war on Iran was setting the region ablaze last week as it pulled allies into the bombing.

Saudi Arabia—a regional imperialist power—joined in the bombing of an Iranian-backed paramilitary group in Iraq last week. Donald Trump wants to ratchet up the pressure on Iran to turn defeat into victory.

>>Page 16



HOW THE FAR RIGHT EXPLOITS THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Tens of thousands of migrants crossed into Spanish territory last week. With it has come a slew of racist and antisemitic sentiment

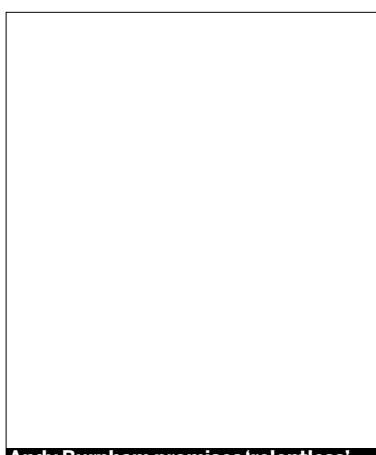
THE REFUGEE crisis in Sabta, north Africa, has become a rallying point for the far right—and the political centre is allowing the right to set the agenda.

US president Donald Trump said the situation in Spanish-ruled Sabta—better known by its colonial name Ceuta—“looks like an invasion of a country by hundreds of thousands of people”.

Italy’s fascist prime minister Giorgia Meloni temporarily suspended the “Schengen Agreement”, which allows borderless travel in the European Union (EU), with Spain.

Denmark’s social democratic government, which has spearheaded attacks on refugees, backed Meloni’s move.

Czech prime minister, right wing billionaire Andrej Babiš, has demanded Spain’s wholesale suspension from the Schengen Agreement.



Andy Burnham promises ‘relentless’ attacks on migrants

Relentless

In Britain, Andy Burnham said Labour would “bring back control of the border” and be “relentless” in stopping refugees crossing the English Channel.

Some 22 of the 27 EU leaders this weekend called for emergency talks, which are due to be held on Tuesday, as Socialist Worker went to press.

Europe’s far right leaders want to force the Spanish state to harden its immigration policies—and the EU senses an opportunity to reinforce “Fortress Europe”. Its sprawling network of barbed wire, border guards and walls

turned the Mediterranean Sea into a mass grave.

The European Pact on Migration and Asylum, which came into force this summer, further strengthens security at Europe’s borders.

And the EU cooperates with regimes in north Africa, including Morocco, Libya and Egypt, to repress migrants.

Even now, a 500 metre containment barrier is being installed to make it even more difficult for people to cross from Africa to Europe via Sabta.

The human cost of the EU’s border regime was on full display in Sabta. At least 67 people died trying to get into the Spanish colony from Morocco, many of them drowning.

Most of the 60,000 people who crossed into Sabta have since decided to leave, saying they faced extreme violence and gruelling living conditions.

Migrants interviewed by the BBC said, “We saw dead bodies in the morning. We had to leave because of hunger—48 hours without food is extremely difficult to endure.”

And some people “assaulted the migrants”, one migrant said. “I witnessed them slash a migrant’s hand and cut off one of his fingers.”

Far right politicians are blaming the Spanish state for letting migrants into Europe.

THE SPRAWLING structure of ‘Fortress Europe’ has long turned the Mediterranean Sea

Progressive

Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez from the Labour-type PSOE has taken a more progressive stance on migration than other European leaders.

The likes of Trump, Meloni and the far right Vox party in the Spanish state want to force Sánchez to dump a decree adopted earlier this year.

The ruling allowed undocumented migrants to apply for legal residence. This was the result of the pressure of the anti-racist movement, such as the big mobilisation of migrants in 2020.

But Sánchez took this stance knowing that, with an ageing population, Spanish big business is desperate for labour. He still backs the EU border regime and Spain maintaining its colonies in north Africa.

Sánchez should have responded to the far right attacks over Sabta by calling for a shift in immigration policy across Europe and an end to Fortress Europe.

Instead, he has spoken about “a violation of the country’s sovereignty” and deployed the army to try to stop refugees making it

across the border.

Sánchez stated that securing the external borders of Europe is a shared goal.

And he has published a league table, boasting that Spain lets fewer irregular migrants into its territory than Italy, Greece or the Balkans.

Many have pointed the finger at Morocco for letting people into Sabta (see right).

Opportunity

David Karvala from United Against Fascism and Racism in Catalonia told Socialist Worker that the Moroccan state did allow the crossings.

“But that doesn’t explain why there are tens of thousands of people who took the opportunity to come,” he said.

“They have been wanting to come through the whole time—there are many reasons why they would want to come to Europe, whether economic, social or political.”

The increase in people trying to cross comes after a Spanish supreme court ruling on 8 July. Judges said that Spanish authorities cannot automatically deport migrants who swim to Sabta, only those who cross

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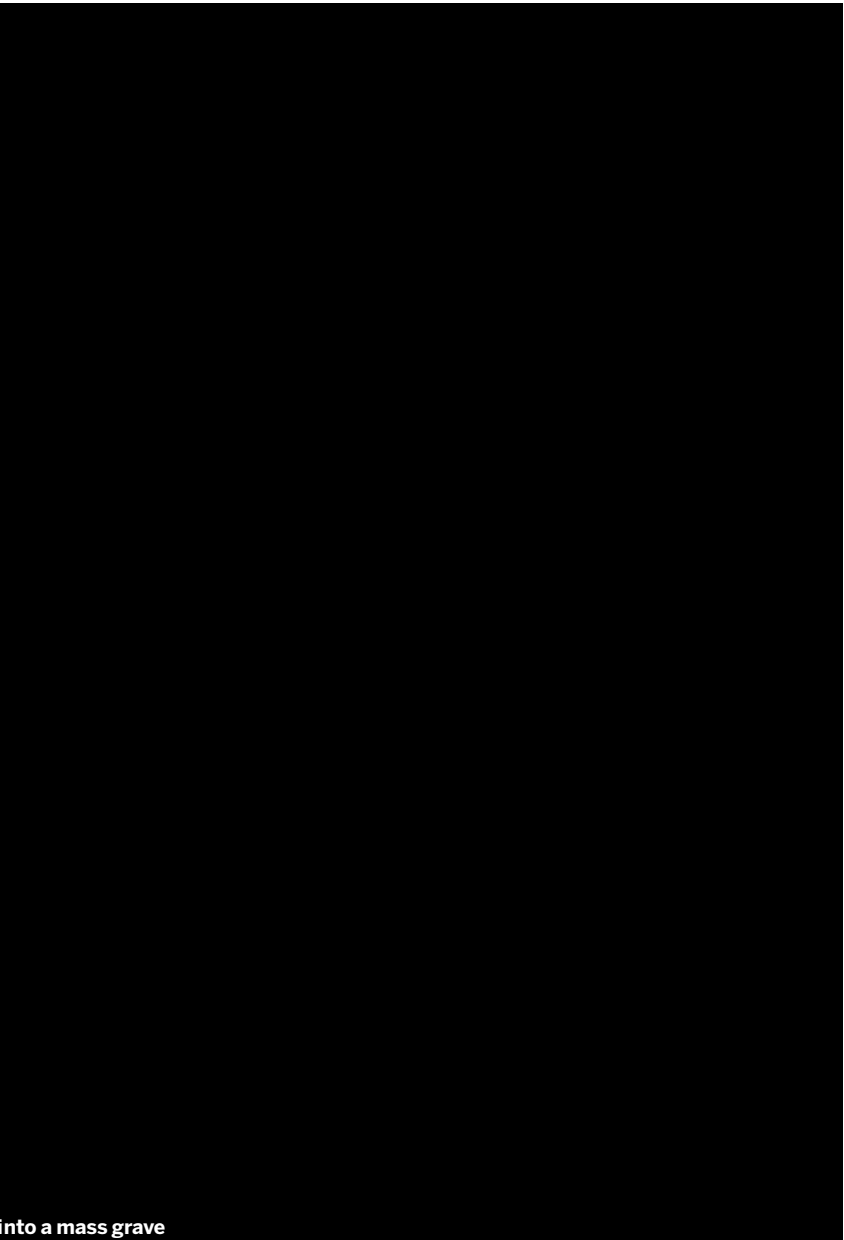
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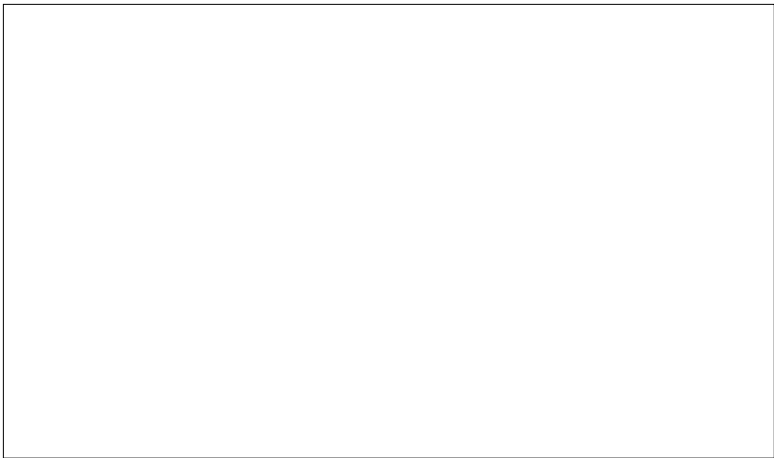
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into a mass grave



Thousands of migrants have returned to Morocco amid violence in Spain

a “physical barrier”. David said that some people in the Spanish state, including on the left, have adopted the rhetoric of “defending the Spanish state”. “Do they want the Spanish security forces to shoot people or to drown them at sea?” he asked. “That is already happening. People are already drowning. Those who say ‘we need to defend Spain’—that’s what it means. “Some people say there are not enough resources for migrants. But the state has doubled the military budget—so there is money for some things.” David said that the first priority for anti-racists should be to defend migrants and asylum seekers and oppose racist campaigns against

them. “People have the right to apply for asylum,” he said. “And we also have to question what the Spanish state is doing in Africa in the first place. “We have to oppose the colonialism of our own state.” In Britain, the far right has also seized on the scenes in Sabta and Mliliya cannot be summarily returned. If you’re an anti-racist in Europe, the starting point is, “We welcome migrants.”

Explaining the relationship between Morocco and the Israeli state

ISRAEL HAS outrageously jumped on the scenes last week to attack Pedro Sánchez’s social democratic government. “Maybe before it continues lecturing us, it’s time it explained to the world why it still maintains colonial enclaves in Africa,” said Danny Danon, the Israeli settler colony’s ambassador to the United Nations.

However, there are dangerous theories floating around among some left wingers too.

They say, in essence, that Israel and its ally Morocco are behind the refugee crisis in Sabta to punish the Spanish state for its stance on Palestine.

This has bled into dangerous talk of Spain being “invaded” as punishment over Sánchez’s stance on Palestine.

States do use the refugee crisis as leverage—for example, the Belarusian regime pushing refugees across its border with the European Union (EU) in 2021.

But the refugee crisis exists independently of such manoeuvres—it is a product of imperialism, racism and climate chaos.

The increase in people trying to make it across the Sabta border came after Spanish judges ruled that migrants arriving by sea to Sabta and Mliliya cannot be summarily returned.

Of those trying to get into Sabta, many are Moroccans facing hardship under neoliberalism while others have fled from Sub-Saharan Africa.

If you’re an anti-racist in Europe, the starting point is, “We welcome migrants.”

Control

It is true that the Moroccan regime has used the border as political leverage.

In 2021, Moroccan authorities relaxed border controls at Sabta after the Spanish government allowed an independence leader from Western Sahara to receive medical treatment in Spain.

To smooth things over with Morocco, the Spanish state

changed its position on Western Sahara.

Spain and Morocco agreed a trade package, worth around £685 million, to encourage Spanish corporations to invest in Morocco.

The other side of the coin was a £428 million package from the EU to clamp down on “illegal immigration”. And the Sánchez government gave another £25 million to pay for patrols of Sabta and the coast.

The Moroccan regime is an important partner in trade—and the repression of migrants.

But Algeria, which backs the Western Sahara national independence movement, broke off relations with Spain in response. It ripped up a trade agreement, which hit Spanish exports and threatened to cut off natural gas.

Spain relies on Algerian imports for around one third of its national gas consumption.

In July of this year, Sánchez met with the Algerian president to rebuild bilateral relations and sign a natural gas deal.

Relationship

The Moroccan state has a long-standing relationship with the Israeli settler colony.

There is a longer history of cooperation against progressive forces. For instance, there is credible evidence that Moroccan intelligence services worked with Israeli and French spooks to assassinate Mehdi Ben Barka from 1965.

Barka fought for

independence, and then radicalised leftwards and fell foul of King Hassan II’s regime.

As an exile, he brought together the Tricontinental Conference of national movements and states in the Global South, including the Palestinians. He was murdered before it took place in 1966.

At times, this relationship has played out in contradictory ways.

Morocco’s rulers know that there is a widespread support for Palestine among ordinary people and want to maintain their rule. But they want to maintain their place in the Western imperialist infrastructure in the region.

Normalise

Most recently, the US and Israel have been strengthening ties with the Moroccan regime.

In 2020, Morocco signed up to the “Abraham Accords”, pushed by the US to “normalise” relations between Israel and Arab states, and it has backed Donald Trump’s colonial land-grab in Gaza.

Today, the likes of Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu have seized on the crisis to bash the Spanish government.

Sánchez has taken a more principled stance over Palestine and the war on Iran than other European leaders.

But there is a difference between the US and Israel exploiting the crisis to further their goals and seeing the hand of Zionism behind an “invasion” of Sabta.

Spain’s legacy of colonialism in north Africa

THE SPANISH state should get out of Sabta and Mliliya—and the other territories it occupies in north Africa.

The Spanish Empire seized these territories between the 1400s and 1600s.

In 1912, Spain grabbed more land when Morocco was partitioned into “protectorates”.

The Spanish and French states dominated the country, alongside an “international zone” around Tanja in the north ruled by Spain, France and Britain.

When the colonial powers



Spanish soldiers hold the decapitated heads of Moroccans during the Rif war, 1922

were forced to give up their “protectorates”, Spain refused to leave Sabta and Mliliya, Hajar Badis, Jazira al-Hoceima and Jzamor Chafarinas.

Anything less than demanding the Spanish state ends its colonial occupation is a collapse into pro-imperialism.

So, the talk of Spain being “invaded” is deeply reactionary—Sabta is a Spanish-occupied land.

It is the far right that brands refugees and migrants as “invaders”.



Restore Britain seizes an opening on the far right

by PAT MEUSEL

NIGEL FARAGE'S far right party Reform UK is under pressure after last week's by-election in Manchester (see page 5).

Reform UK finished second—and a distant second—to Labour.

But Farage isn't only troubled by his failure to challenge Labour. He also faces a threat from the right.

Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain, got nearly 50,000 votes. And since then, Lowe has come out swinging.

In a video posted last Sunday, Lowe pitched a unity appeal to Farage. In reality, it was aiming to radicalise Reform UK supporters further to the right.

In it, he pointed to five principles for Reform UK and Restore Britain to come together around—restoring Britain's borders, demographic security, the death penalty, self-sufficiency and the country's "faith in politics".

Lowe started Restore as a pressure group within Reform UK and the Tories in June 2025. Lowe had been suspended from far right Reform following accusations of bullying and threats of violence.

Reform UK was eager to distance itself from Lowe, who was close to outright fascist Tommy Robinson.

Lowe has since thrown his support behind the racist "Pink Ladies" and "Raise the Colours" campaigns.

A number of Nazis, including Callum Barker and Steve Laws, have now been revealed to be members of

Restore Britain.

Within days of setting the party up in February, Lowe claimed 50,000 people had joined. He's since claimed 130,000 members, with branches across Britain.

With the ability to attract 50,000 votes, Restore Britain is clearly a threat.

He has promised, "Restore will not just stop mass immigration. We will reverse it. For the foreseeable future, far more people must leave Britain than arrive."

Hates

"If a foreign national is unable to speak English, lives in social housing, claims benefits, refuses to work, fails to integrate, commits crime or even actively hates our way of life and wishes to do us harm, they must leave."

But it is Islamophobia that is at the heart of his racism. He promised that Restore would be committed to "resisting the relentless creep of radical Islam, banning the burka, outlawing sharia law, blocking cousin marriages and halal slaughter."

And he's since funded an "independent inquiry" into child sexual abuse, weaponising violence against women and girls to push Islamophobia.

Restore has published a policy paper on "Mass deportations—Legitimacy, legality and logistics."

At its core is a "two-pronged approach—voluntary departures reaching around half a million or more per year driven by a hostile environment, and between 150,000-200,000 enforced removals per year".

This is central to the appeal he is now pitching to Reform UK supporters who, after set backs for Farage's party, might be looking for answers even further to the right.

Andy Burnham's Labour is doing nothing to stop the rightward shift in British politics. In fact, he is continuing Keir Starmer's strategy of conceding to the right.

But attempting to "out-Reform" Reform UK only further legitimises racism and fuels the rise of the far right.

RUPERT LOWE is trying to build a force further to the right of Reform UK

Scottish anti-racists say 'We don't trust the state to stop the fascists'

by REBECCA GIVAN

MAINSTREAM POLITICAL parties in Scotland are calling for a state ban on the far right thugs of Unite the Clans.

Unite the Clans has stoked racist violence in Glasgow this summer. Its supporters have given Nazi salutes in full view of the police. And 15 of them have been charged with offences including assault, carrying a weapon and hate crimes.

The ban calls from Scottish National Party (SNP) first minister John Swinney, the Labour Party, the Lib Dems and some Greens such as Maggie Chapman MSP, are a sign that politicians are under pressure from the anti-racist movement.

Over 4,000 people marched in Glasgow at the end of July, outnumbering the fascists.

But a state ban is double-edged—and trusting the British state isn't the way to beat the far right.

Héctor Sierra from Stand Up To Racism (SUTR), which organised the counter-demonstration, warns

against trusting institutions that "are not the friends of anti-racists and anti-fascists".

"Of course I will not shed tears if any fascists get arrested," he told Socialist Worker.

But he argued, "It shifts agency away from mass action from below of the kind we saw on the counter-protest and into the hands of state forces.

"These are the same forces that enabled the fascists to march and that have incubated their growth," he explained.

"Any moves to strengthen the powers of the state are bound to

be used against the left even more than against the right," he added.

The police conceded to the far right on Saturday of last week. They wanted to bat away accusations of "two tier policing"—the claim that police are soft on the left and black and brown people.

So they allowed the small Unite the Clans delegation to have the space that was meant for the anti-racists.

Stephen, a SUTR activist from Edinburgh, told Socialist Worker, "You find lots of these racist and far right figures are involved in lots of different groups.

"So banning one group doesn't solve the problem. Nor does it solve the conditions that created the fascists in the first place.

"It doesn't solve the crises that have driven people to believe that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are the problem."

Building and deepening the roots of the anti-racist movement to take on the far right—and the racism from mainstream politicians that fuels it—is key.

Restore claims 130,000 members

Manchester by-election shows ‘Burnham bounce’

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEVANS

THE RESULT of the Greater Manchester mayoral by-election showed that there is a “Burnham bounce” for the Labour Party. But it’s not as high as Labour spokespeople make out. Labour’s candidate Bev Craig, leader of Manchester City Council, won 47 percent of first preference votes. Far right party Reform UK trailed behind in second place with 21 percent and the Green Party were in third, with 12 percent. Restore Britain, Rupert Lowe’s far right breakaway from Reform UK, got almost 9 percent.

Trouble
Anti-racists are celebrating that the by-election spells further trouble for Reform UK. Clare from Greater Manchester Stand Up To Racism told Socialist Worker, “Over the four week election campaign activists delivered 30,000 leaflets. “Last Wednesday, trade unionists across Manchester, were out campaigning to tell members to say, ‘No to Reform UK.’ Key workplaces, including hospitals and council buildings, were targeted and activists and had a positive response.” Clare added, “Although, this result is a further setback for Reform, this battle is not over. “We now need to have a massive unity march and rally on Saturday 26 September to push back the racists further.”

Why is there a “Burnham bounce”?
Almost all incumbent parties that change prime minister midway



LABOUR’S BEV Craig won the Manchester mayoral by-election

through their term get a boost. Labour rose 7 points when Tony Blair resigned in 2007, while the Tories saw a 6 point rise when Theresa May left Downing Street in 2019. Only Liz Truss, who took over from Boris Johnson in 2022, failed to boost her party’s performance. The “Burnham bounce” flows from working class voters who hope that Labour will break with Keir Starmer’s rotten legacy. Burnham has pitched leftwards. When he promises “the biggest changes in 40 years” and slams Margaret Thatcher’s legacy, it doesn’t sound like an appeal to rebuild the failed centre. Starmer, in contrast, presented himself as a grey technocrat. But the main source of the “Burnham bounce” are people who switched to back the Greens.

When Starmer resigned, 14 percent of people who voted Labour said they would now back the Green Party. Since Burnham took over, that figure is down to 9 percent. **Betrayal** But to keep those voters Burnham has to deliver. Burnham is already showing signs that he won’t take on big business. He appointed John Healey as chancellor who made clear that Labour won’t break with its self-imposed “fiscal rules”. And he has already backed blowing billions on nuclear weapons, while warning of “difficult choices” in funding social care (see below). We have to build the widest possible solidarity for workers’ struggles that can deliver the change that millions need.

Burnham throws billions at Trident nukes

ONLY A day after he said funding social care would require “difficult choices,” Andy Burnham committed himself to throwing away billions on replacing Trident nukes. Burnham visited Barrow-in-Furness, in Cumbria, last week, to launch the next phase of Trident. The new Dreadnought class submarines to launch the nuclear missiles are made here. Burnham has already backed a commitment to increase defence spending by over £25 billion a year by 2035 to reach 3.5 percent of GDP. The new submarines can carry up to 40 nuclear warheads—enough destructive power to destroy Moscow and several other major Russian cities. But Britain is at far greater risk of climate catastrophe than it is of



The planned Dreadnought submarines

Russia launching an invasion. BAE Systems, which owns the Barrow shipyard, has been awarded the largest share of the latest phase of the Dreadnought programme, worth £5.9 billion. BAE systems arms factories have been the target of repeated protests over the firm’s sale of weaponry to Israel during the genocide in Gaza.

Burnham’s promises of jobs and regeneration will not be fulfilled by wasting money on Trident. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) estimates that the true cost of the Trident replacement will be more like £205 billion—not the government’s projected £31 billion. The government could employ 11,500 workers at an average annual wage of £34,400 for less than £400 million a year. £205 billion would sustain these jobs for over 500 years. Nor will Trident “keep us safe”—it only fuels the new arms race that makes the world more dangerous. Burnham should not put billions into the pockets of BAE systems. The world does not need any more weapons. The money should go on healthcare and education and developing green energy.

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE HITS HOME

MORE THAN half of England and Wales is officially in drought. Reservoirs in Somerset, in south west England, are now officially classed as exceptionally low, at only half full. Suffolk, in south east England, has only received 2 percent of its usual average July rainfall this year. And wildfires rage across Scotland and Suffolk, leaving landscapes scorched. It is becoming increasingly hard for politicians to deny the reality of climate change—but some still do. Tory ex-peer and coal baron Matt Ridley says that the “cult of rewilding” is to blame for wildfires. The Tory rag, the Telegraph, tells workers to “learn to live with a Mediterranean climate” as the British government reports that 2,877 people died in “heat-associated deaths” in May and June this year. According to the Health Security Agency, this is one of the highest death tolls since records began. The Scottish National Party (SNP), which once positioned itself as a world leader in climate, has returned to support for the oil and gas industry. Key party figures this week mourned BP’s departure from the North Sea and called on Andy Burnham to back the industry. The SNP blames Westminster net zero policies, but the North Sea is a mature basin with declining production. Oil firms have been leaving the North Sea for decades and new firms buying up oil fields are only interested in short term gains not permanent jobs. But the SNP has failed to support a just transition with retraining and new jobs for oil and gas workers in renewables. Instead, they want the taxpayer to prop up a declining industry. And we’ve seen the disastrous result of putting more money into fossil fuels—rising summer temperatures, burning forests and thousands of deaths. Capitalism and the ruling class has failed to prevent climate disaster and workers are paying the price. We need a new system, one that puts people before profit and ends the climate catastrophe.

RICH AND POWERFUL TO BLAME FOR ABUSE

FIVE SURVIVORS of serial abuser Mohamed Al-Fayed have been confirmed as victims of modern slavery. The billionaire and former owner of Fulham Football Club and Harrods department store spent nearly four decades abusing hundreds of women in plain sight. A year after Al-Fayed’s death in August 2023, at the age of 94, more than 400 victims and witnesses had come forward with allegations of assault, harassment and rape. Rachael Louw, a survivor who has waived her anonymity, was confirmed as a victim of human trafficking in June of this year. There is conclusive evidence that suggests that four other women were trafficked. The far right are whipping up lies that migrants and Muslims pose a unique threat to women. But we should remember who the real abusers are. The real systems of abuse are not set up by desperate migrants trying to make it to safety. They are set up by the rich and powerful. That has been exposed with the Jeffrey Epstein scandal. Al-Fayed’s crimes were widely known publicly and privately. They were documented in the media and the police were told about them. Samantha Ramsay, now deceased, made allegations about Al-Fayed to the Metropolitan Police as early as 1995. Even the royal family was alerted to the allegations by Scotland Yard. But the warnings were ignored and investigations were dropped because it was decided a conviction against the billionaire wasn’t realistic. The rich always close ranks and point the finger elsewhere to protect their money, power and the system itself. The only way to bring them down is to bring down the whole rotten system.

ANALYSIS

ROB HOVEMAN



Trade wars point to more pain ahead

THE WORLD economy faces potentially dire consequences without action to reduce “global imbalances” between the US and China. That was the warning the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan shark issued last week.

China has a huge—and growing—trade surplus as its exports soar, while the US has a huge trade deficit. This means the US is buying more from other countries than it's selling to them.

“History shows”, the IMF opines, “that large imbalances can unwind abruptly through capital flow reversals, asset price corrections and weaker growth.”

In other words, it can lead to currency devaluations and interest rate hikes, stock market crashes and recession.

The IMF, which was set up as part of the US liberal capitalist order after 1945, points out the US is continuing to run a massive trade deficit. It is 0.9 percent of world Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—the total value of goods and services produced in the world. This exceeds the surpluses of the European Union (EU) and China combined.

This is despite Donald Trump's tariffs, which were intended to reduce imports and bring manufacturing back to the US. Instead, his tariffs have pushed up US inflation to 3.5 percent, well above the Federal Reserve's target of 2 percent.

At the same time, imports are increasing due to the massive investments in AI infrastructure. The US is relying on a huge inflow of foreign investment to finance its trade deficit.

If there's any significant change in capitalists' willingness to invest in the US, it will have dramatic implications.

That vulnerability has been increased by the growing role of hedge funds and other financial institutions, which are fickle investors.

Imbalances

The IMF is also worried that imbalances between the US and China will continue to increase international tensions and trade wars.

The Chinese trade surplus has continued to grow and now represents some 0.6 percent of world GDP. The EU is itself now considering serious restrictions on Chinese imports.

In order to address the dangers posed by these huge and persisting imbalances, the IMF is proposing co-ordinated international action.

In short, it wants the US to reduce and China to increase its domestic spending.

But the contradictions of capitalism are not so easily overcome. Inter-imperialist rivalry is more intense than ever and there are huge political and economic costs and barriers to changing these imbalances.

Consumer spending in China has been depressed for years ever since the Chinese property bubble burst.

China lacks a comprehensive social security system—despite supposedly being a “communist” state.

Many people in China had become dependent on growing property values, which have now slumped, as insurance against sickness and old age. So now they are having to save more.

On top of that, local government is hamstrung with debts that used to be financed by property boom land sales. The Chinese central government itself seems relatively content to see economic growth through exports.

As for the US, economic growth is currently being powered almost solely by massive AI investment and spending by the richest 10 percent of the population. On paper, they have seen their wealth rise massively through the stock market boom.

Steps to curb AI-related imports would raise prices. And it would threaten the sector's profitability, which is needed to justify the loans and stock market valuations it receives.

Curbing consumer spending would mean hitting that richest 10 percent, which is not something Trump has any intention of doing.

And if spending growth were to slow in the US, it would exacerbate the enormous federal government budget deficit.

There is no painless way out of the multiple contradictions of contemporary capitalism.

We can rest assured that the bosses and the governments that represent them will seek to impose most of the pain on the working class and the poor. It's our job to build the resistance to that now.

LETTERS

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

Why socialists visiting picket lines is our bread and butter

SOCIALISTS supporting workers on the picket line is vital.

Around 40 striking workers and supporters marched to an NHS board meeting in Leeds on Thursday of last week demanding higher pay.

These NHS workers play a vital role in the day-to-day operation of the hospitals, providing clinical assistance to medical workers and support to patients.

For two years they have been demanding to be regraded from pay band 2 to band 3.

Management remains stubborn in denying them fair pay and recognition, but the workers are determined to win.

The strikers were loud and confident, chanting, “The workers united, will never be defeated!”

They demanded their Unison union reps be let into the meeting room, and a board member had to come out to address the strikers.

Joanne, who has been working at the NHS trust for 38 years, said, “We're not going to back down until we win.” She said

the reps were only let in because of the weight of the demonstration.

Young members of the Leeds branch of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) were there to support the strike.

Campaigns

We talked to workers about the local campaigns against the transphobic EHRC guidance and a planned Microsoft data centre in Leeds.

We spoke about how unions should vocally refuse to implement the

EHRC guidance, which bars trans+ people from accessing single-sex spaces.

And we discussed how trade unions in the health service should take a stance against the mining of patients' data by AI firms such as Palantir.

The demonstration gave the strikers a shot in the arm.

They all left the demonstration with their heads held high.

Workers' rights will be won on the picket lines.

Nico Li
Leeds

Our roots at workplaces

IN TRAFFORD, Greater Manchester, we're planning to sell Socialist Worker (SW) every week at the town hall to council workers.

We have previously held united front stalls on the workplace days of action for Palestine, and for the Together Alliance's march.

It was clear that there are workers there who are interested in our politics.

So when the leaflet for the Unison union's pay ballot came out, I went down with some younger members, SW and leaflets.

A Unison member who works elsewhere, who we met on the Together coach, also helped with the leaflets as the union wasn't doing anything. We had some great conversations, exchanged numbers with an LGBT+ union rep, and sold seven papers.

After that we leafleted for the Stand up to Racism day of action for the Manchester mayoral election. We are looking forward to strengthening some of the connections, and bringing some of the conversations into our SWP branch meetings.

These connections with trade unionists will be invaluable in the battles ahead as workers find that Andy Burnham isn't going to deliver everything they had hoped.

Sue Caldwell
Manchester



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Mr Burnham, we need a national care service

SOCIALIST WORKER is right that Andy Burnham needs to create a National Care Service.

My parents have just gone into a care home. They are not cheap—£1,500 per week is not unusual for fees.

Mum and Dad are lucky as they own a house and have a little savings. When I told them that they all would have to be used to pay for their care, they were shocked and heart-broken.

They didn't understand, saying that they had worked since they were 15 and had

always paid their taxes. But it doesn't matter—this is what privatised care is.

When their money goes, the cash-starved local authority will have to take over.

Of course, the money doesn't go to workers—it's for the owners.

It doesn't have to be this way and the answer is obvious.

Take adult social care back into public ownership and pay for it by taxing the rich because the elderly deserve dignity and care.

Phil Brett
Whitley Bay, Tyneside

...and a guillotine

REFORM UK leader Nigel Farage is struggling to explain numerous “financial irregularities”

These include a £5 million “gift” from Thai citizen and cryptocurrency speculator Christopher Harborne and undeclared personal benefits worth hundreds of thousands of pounds provided by “Posh” George Cottrell.

I am reminded, for no reason in particular, of George Bernard Shaw's comment. “The more I see of the moneyed classes, the more I understand the guillotine,” he said.

Sasha Simic
East London

Why Kashmiris are rising up against the Pakistani state

Pakistan and India are fighting over the region because of its strategic importance, but mass resistance is the way forwards, writes Yuri Prasad

A MASS movement in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir—known as Azad Kashmir—is demanding greater democratic rights in the midst of a rigged election for the regional parliament.

Last week, paramilitary police opened fire on thousands of supporters of the civil rights group, the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), who were gathered in the city of Rawalakot. Protesters had planned to march to Muzaffarabad, the regional capital.

According to JAAC, police have killed more than 40 people since the widespread protests began.

Why are Kashmiris protesting?

The movement is demanding change to the current electoral system. It wants to reallocate parliamentary seats away from those reserved for Kashmiris living elsewhere in the country to those who actually live in the territory.

The current system allows the big parties that dominate Pakistan nationally to also dominate Kashmir.

Some 12 of the 53 seats in the regional assembly are reserved for people whose families long ago fled to Azad Kashmir from the pogroms in 1940s India.

But many of those families no longer live in the region.

Those 12 seats are often used to prop up parties in government that few people in Kashmir voted for.

The dispute escalated in early June after the regional Supreme Court ruled that the non-resident seats cannot be abolished without a constitutional amendment passed by the Pakistan parliament.

Why do India and Pakistan fight over Kashmir?

Both the Indian and Pakistani states covet Kashmir for its strategic importance, not because they care about the wishes of the people who live there.

The territory is not only a border between the two, but also has a border with China. That's why it is

one of the most militarised areas in the world.

Pakistan and India have fought four wars over Kashmir. The Kashmiris are pawns in their game.

How was Kashmir divided?

In 1947, when Britain partitioned India to create Pakistan, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was ruled by a Hindu prince but had a Muslim majority.

As its ruler prevaricated over which state to join, Pakistani guerrillas crossed the border and Indian troops invaded to repel them.

The territory was divided between them and, to a lesser extent, China.

The borders were drawn arbitrarily, with families split apart and conflict locked in.

The Indian state offered Kashmiris limited independence in the part it controlled. This, it said, was the prelude to a referendum that would decide its future. But such a vote never came.

What do socialists say should happen now?

We want a reunified Kashmir, but we side with neither Pakistan nor India.

We are against the Indian state which persecutes Muslims in Indian-controlled Kashmir. We demand full freedom of expression and association and the return of autonomy to Kashmir.

And we are against the Pakistani state as it shoots down protesters demanding democratic reforms and uses Kashmir to conduct a proxy war against India.

Instead, we demand that the Kashmiri people themselves determine their future. We agree with those on the Kashmiri left who demand that the vote on independence that the United Nations promised in 1948 takes place.

The solution for Kashmir is to rip up all those borders and allow the people to choose how they wish to live. But in the context of such fierce great-power rivalry, only a revolutionary movement in both India and Pakistan could make that a real possibility.

Longer version on socialistworker.co.uk

A BRUTAL state crackdown has engulfed Pakistan-controlled Kashmir for weeks

Strike grounds WestJet flights in Canada

by PAT MEUSEL

NEARLY 4,500 flight attendants in Canada suspended a strike on Monday, after winning an improved offer from the bosses.

The workers at WestJet, the country's second-largest airline, walked out on strike last Sunday in a dispute over pay.

The strike forced the airline to cancel at least 700 flights.

WestJet and Cupe Local branch 8125, the union representing the workers, have since reached a tentative agreement.

A staggering 97.3 percent of Cupe members voted by 99.4 percent for the strike last month.

WestJet immediately retaliated with a "lockout", withholding pay and stopping members from working.

Flight attendants in North America are not paid for the work they do before take-off.

This means they aren't paid for as many as 35 hours of work a month.

WestJet's latest offer, before workers walked out, was a 13 percent pay rise from 1 October.

But Cupe made clear at the time that bosses had not addressed the issue at the heart of the dispute—flight attendants' unpaid labour.

"Boarding, safety sweeps, assisting passengers and ground delays are entirely on

our dime," said Alia Hussain, president of Cupe Local 8125.

Prime minister Mark Carney's Liberal government did not intervene in this dispute. But it did in a similar dispute last August.

Less than 12 hours into a strike by over 10,000 flight attendants at Air Canada, labour minister Patty Hajdu imposed a "back-to-work" order on strikers.

Defied

The workers defied the order and stayed out for three days.

The strike only ended after Air Canada and Cupe reached a tentative agreement. A few weeks later, workers overwhelmingly rejected the "improved offer".

But, due to the agreement,

a vote to reject meant pay was referred to mediation and then binding arbitration, with no new strikes permitted.

It is a warning not to trust bosses in negotiations.

The Air Canada strike caused 3,200 cancelled flights and cost the bosses £225 million.

The details of the tentative agreement in the WestJet dispute have not yet been made public.

But Alia Hussain said that it was a significant step forward.

"It came together in a way that made sense for us to take to our membership," she said.

Cupe members will now have 30 days to sign off on the offer.

But if it falls short of what workers demand, they need to be ready to reject—and to resume the strike.

WestJet flight attendants strike at Vancouver International Airport

‘WE FIGHT CANCER—BUT WE’RE FORCED TO STRIKE FOR PROPER PAY’

As the battle over pay at the Institute of Cancer Research escalates into an all-out, indefinite strike **Camilla Royle** talks to strikers about their work—and their fight for dignity

CANCER KILLS people every day, destroying relationships, families and friendships. The disease terrifies people. Yet some of those tasked with finding treatments, causes and cures for it are paid so badly that they have been on strike since May.

The battle at the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) has become one of the most significant strikes in Britain—and last week it became all-out and indefinite.

Strikers include scientific researchers and the many people whose work makes that research possible. People who work in the stores, maintain the labs and keep the scientific instruments clean are among the lowest paid.

And those doing the research say ICR has taken their skills and expertise for granted. Striker Caitlin is among them. She studied for years to get a PhD and became a scientist, but now she feels pushed out of a career that she loves.

“I’m from a town in Wales called Merthyr Tydfil,” she told Socialist Worker. “There was a big uprising in the 1830s over suppressed wages and everyone is really proud of that.

“Like many former industrial towns, it’s struggled. There is a lot of poverty.

“Coming from there I’ve always been proud to get the level of education I have. I was determined to work in cancer research. Cancer has touched my own life. It’s not just a job, it’s a vocation.



ICR boss thinks he's worth £457,000



In real terms, workers have lost 16 percent of their pay since the 2019 reorganisation

“I’d like to say to young girls that it’s a brilliant career. But I feel that ICR is turning me into a liar. How can I tell people to go into academia when it’s not sustainable? I’m getting poorer.”

Caitlin said that low wages for scientists were turning the clock back to a time when science was a pastime for the wealthy. It means science will only be done by a less diverse group of people.

As they enter their third month of action, the strikers are still standing strong, with picket lines every day at their sites in Chelsea in west London and Sutton in south London.

Opportunity

The Unite union members are angry that pay has failed to keep up with the cost of living. In 2019, bosses removed incremental pay scales that had given workers the opportunity to increase their pay as they progressed in their careers.

This means that in real terms, workers have lost 16 percent of their pay since then. To add insult to injury, the top boss, Kristian Helin, has had a 40 percent pay rise and now rakes in a salary of £457,000.

The strikers know ICR, which claims £154.5 million in unrestricted reserves, can afford to pay more. But the strikes are about more than pay. They are about whether this kind of work and the people who do it are valued.

“It’s the disrespect—the way management speaks to workers who do the research, who fundraise for it and

Strikers in high spirits on their picket line last week (above) ...and doing a conga dance around their bosses (below)

communicate the research,” says striker Lynn. She works on making treatments for children with incurable brain tumours.

“Does society want me to stop doing this work and work in the City for a bigger salary?” she asks. “I’m out here on the picket line for my colleagues who are struggling. No-one should be going into debt working full time on necessary cancer research.”

ICR boasts over a century of world-leading cancer research. It was scientists there who first made breakthroughs in understanding the causes of cancer. Scientists there have discovered more cancer drugs than at any other centre in the world.

Chris explains that scientific funding is dropping dramatically—including at other institutions, such as the Jodrell Bank Observatory—so it’s a wider issue than ICR.

But, he says, it’s “shortsighted” for ICR to try to save money by not paying workers a living wage.

“It’s a bad environment for scientific research. But the top management are getting paid enough that they should be the ones finding a solution.”

Chris says people will go elsewhere if ICR doesn’t pay enough for them to afford to live in London. And workers from other parts of the world will be put off because ICR has cut back the amount of support it gives them for visas.

He points to the way ICR cut its audio-visual department, meaning

Fighting cancer is vital work—so how come it is so poorly paid?

How strikers are organised

ICR STRIKERS have danced and chanted on their picket lines every day. And they’ve held marches and rallies and themed strike days—for example, one centred on anti-racism.

They have had solidarity visits from everyone from Unite general secretary Sharon Graham to comedian and cancer survivor Mark Steel—and even a group of bus drivers arriving in a double-decker battle bus.

Union rep Aiden says, “The picket lines are what give the strike its power—and they’ve been amazing.”

Strong picket lines keep the pressure on management. When reps go to negotiate with the bosses, having lots of workers actively joining the strike helps back them up.

ICR reps have taken striking workers from the picket lines into negotiations to explain directly to bosses the impact low pay is having on their lives.

The picket lines can also help keep morale up—striking can be an isolating experience if you are stuck at home.

“And it keeps the strike visible,” says Aiden. “People who cross the picket line and go into work have to make that choice every day.”

ICR strikers are confident they can win. Caitlin says, “It’s a landmark strike that can signal what’s possible in other workplaces if you stand up for what you deserve. Let them know how valuable you are.”

‘Everyone can do something to support this vital strike’

LIZ WHEATLEY from Camden Unison explained how trade unionists can help the ICR strike win.

“We had a striker from ICR come to our online weekly members’ meeting,” she said.

The meeting happened just as Unison members in local government were being balloted for strikes over pay.

“As our members were starting to receive their ballot papers, they were hearing from people who had already made the decision to strike. They were encouraging us,” said Liz.

“It was great for them to come and get support from the branch. But it was also helpful to us. It made it real why we need to act too.”

The Unison branch at London’s Homerton Hospital also invited ICR strikers to meet its members.

Homerton union activist Jordan Rivera explained that they had invited health strikers from across Britain to come too, as well as radical economist Grace Blakeley and the union’s general secretary, Andrea Egan.

“The whole day was about putting

yourself in the bigger picture,” she said. “We don’t have to accept that there is not enough money for the NHS.”

“The ICR workers are doing cancer research, so obviously it’s connected to health,” she said.

“And some of the things they talked about, like not being able to get hot food at the canteen, made people at Homerton say, ‘That’s typical’. Everybody knows what that feels like.”

The Unison branch made a £500 donation to the ICR strike fund.

Big, well-organised union branches such as these have an established tradition of solidarity with other groups of workers that trade unionists have fought for.

“But everyone can do something,” said Jordan. “Anybody could take an ICR leaflet round their office and ask people to give a small amount.

“Everybody knows how important cancer research is. Everybody has a relative or knows someone who has cancer. It’s outrageous that people doing that research are not paid enough.”

What you can do now...

USE THE collection sheet to do a collection at work, or at a union or campaign meeting.

Circulate the crowdfunder: www.gofundme.com/f/cancer-researchers-get-a-fair-pay-deal/

Organise a donation from your trade union branch.

Reference: ICR-Strike Fund.
Acc name: Unite LE/524 Branch.
Sort Code: 608301.

Acc number: 30010808
Invite ICR strikers to your next meeting.

Organise for strikers to come to your town or city in a delegation—and set up meetings for them.

technology in lecture theatres no longer works properly. Chris says world-renowned scientists come to ICR to give lectures. He adds it’s “embarrassing when the tech doesn’t work and you can’t call anyone to make it work”.

“I’ve been here 27 years. I’ve seen a lot of great science,” he says. “But if we can’t get great scientists, we won’t be able to do world-leading research.”

Goodwill

Some workers at ICR regularly work 15-hour days. And workers are keen to stress that they are willing to work hard if a job needs to be done. But they want their goodwill to be reciprocated.

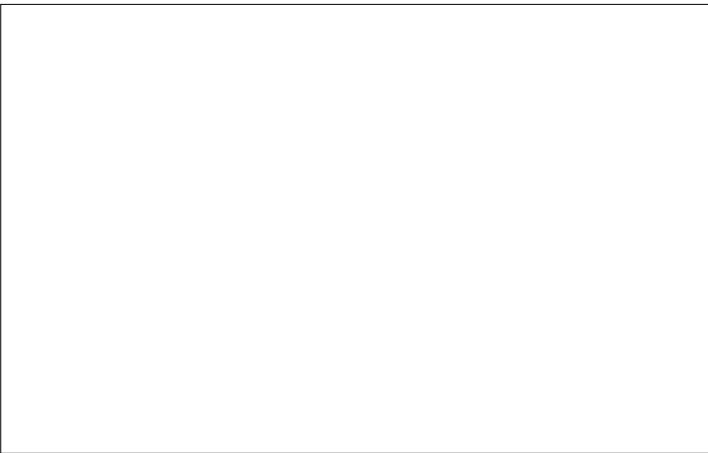
Talking about her job, Katy says, “Everyone is squeezed. Our jobs get more and more complicated. More and more is expected for less and less in return. They don’t value us.”

Another striker explained that on the Sutton site, one of the biggest issues is the changes bosses made to the staff canteen—and that bosses didn’t listen to workers’ views about them.

“There is no place to get hot food,” they said. “There’s less space to sit and eat. People are being forced to eat at their desks. The canteen has changed suppliers, and now prices have risen.

“We had no say in that. We all shouted loudly. There was a big petition and they ignored us. I liked that canteen and now it’s awful.”

But the striker explained that union organising had forced management to



retreat on some issues. “They were going to charge for parking,” they said. “We have won on that. Yes, we need eco-friendly ways of travelling. But Sutton does not have good public transport links.”

Bosses have also backtracked on plans to remove some workers from the USS pension scheme, which would introduce a two-tier pension provision.

The resolve at ICR is impressive and determined, but this now has to be a fight for the whole trade union movement. Those workers, who daily help drive back the scourge of cancer, are now the ones who need our support.

It’s a sign—union placards at a ICR picket line (above)
Rush your donation to the strikers by scanning this QR code on your phone (below)



POLITICS is everywhere—in our consumer choices, online echo chambers and culture wars. But it can also feel like politics is nowhere—at least nowhere solid and tangible.

A new book by Anton Jäger, *Hyperpolitics—Extreme Politicization without Political Consequences*, seeks to understand this phenomenon.

Hyperpolitics captures this political culture and its frenetic cycles of outrage and burnout that change nothing. Jäger describes how politics has become unmoored from political organisation.

But acute though Jäger's account is, his response to this hyperpolitics is to advocate a return to the failed political institutions of the past.

Jäger sees the past 100 years or so as divided into four periods. The first is the "mass politics" of the short 20th century from 1914-89. During these years, politicisation was high and people engaged with politics electorally and on the streets. They joined political parties, unions, church congregations and working men's clubs.

Jäger says that it is no coincidence that this was also a time when political struggle resulted in concrete gains.

But there are several problems with this description.

Mass politics did not begin in 1914. The end of the 19th century saw European socialist parties win millions of members and create a range of cultural and social institutions—cycle clubs, choirs, Sunday schools.

And labelling events as disparate as the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the Holocaust, as "mass politics" obscures rather than illuminates.

The next of Jäger's periods is the "post-politics" of the years from the collapse of Stalinism to the financial crash in 2008. In the 1990s mainstream political parties were abandoned by the elites and experienced a "mass desertion from below".

NEOLIBERALISM was a response to the end of the post-war boom, one that hollowed out the institutions of formal democracy and prompted a crisis within social democracy.

The technocrats took care of business while the rich got richer and everyone else "danced away industry, politics, history itself", Jäger writes.

But Francis Fukuyama's end of history thesis, which argued that liberal capitalism had finally triumphed, was soon challenged by events.

There were huge strikes, and riots—think Los Angeles and Rodney King, or the Poll

ANTI-MIGRANT PROTESTS in Rotherham during 2024—Jäger says politics is all around but it is volatile and disorienting

'EVERYTHING EXPLODES AND NOTHING CHANGES'

Judy Cox reviews *Hyperpolitics*, a popular new book by Anton Jäger that addresses the strange times we are living through

Anton Jäger

Tax and the end of Margaret Thatcher's rule in Britain.

And imperialism re-entered the scene with the Iraq War, which sparked the global anti-war movement of the early 2000s. This movement was not "post-political"—it was both an attempt to influence international policy and an intensely political movement.

Formal membership of mainstream political parties has declined since the high-point of the 1950s and 1960s. This "weakening of mass party



Technocrats took care of business while everyone else danced the 1990s away, Jäger argues

capillary structures" means political leaders are less able to mobilise support or develop coherent strategies, as Jäger points out.

But it wasn't the institutions themselves that won reforms. The stable, two-party system was itself a product of a system that was expanding and able and willing to reform public services and, when forced by working class militancy, to concede pay rises. That era is over.

Jäger's third period is the "anti-political" decade that began in 2008 when economic crisis

ended the neoliberal consensus.

It was a decade of mass movements as diverse as the Tea Party in the US, the Occupy movement and the Arab Spring. During these years, politicisation returned with a vengeance. Politicisation of the people against the elites saw the rise of new populist parties.

Jäger cites the political philosophers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe who argued that radical populism depended on creating cross-class alliances rather than relying on the working class. It was the right, Marine Le Pen, Germany's AfD party and Hungary's Viktor Orbán, who capitalised on this new politicisation.

Jäger is rightly scathing about the role of the Democratic Party in absorbing and destroying progressive movements in the US.

But Jäger is wrong to dismiss the working class in favour of radical populism. Organisations based on the idea of radical populism such as Podemos in the Spanish state have all too often collapsed into mainstream politics or been extinguished by the economic and political institutions they failed to defy.

Revolutionaries offer a different vision of organisation.

OVER THE past decade or so we have experienced hyperpolitics, Jäger's fourth period. This idea has captured the zeitgeist of the left with descriptions of an intense politicisation with few institutional ambitions, in which everything explodes and nothing changes.

Jäger says the "life-worlds" of the online environment encourage deinstitutionalised, impermanent engagement and offer "repertoires of social expression that require little or no long-term obligation".

His descriptions of hyperpolitics will resonate with many who are bewildered by hashtag activism and online outrage that leads nowhere.

To highlight the originality of hyperpolitics, however, Jäger downplays the multiple ways in which people are resisting the system as they always have done, by striking, by demonstrating, by taking to the streets.

He is dismissive of social movements that do not fit his periodisation, such as Black Lives Matter. Those who marched on Washington with Martin Luther King in 1963 wore union badges, he writes, while those protesting over the death of George Floyd had no visible political affiliations.

But it is deeply misleading to compare insurgent mass movements against police violence, which have occurred for decades, with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Yes, the BLM movement became incorporated and

commodified, but not before it changed ideas on a mass scale. Jäger's book was first published in German before the Palestine movement erupted in October 2023. But that movement, which saw millions demonstrate, fundraise and join organisations, is certainly a challenge to the whole idea of hyperpolitics.

Jäger is a self-avowed Marxist but his periodisation remains at the level of description. His four periods are marked by great historical and cultural events—the First World War, the collapse of Stalinism, the economic crash of 2008—but nowhere are these events explained.

Jäger's four political eras exist above economic developments, intensifying imperialism, revolutions and mass strikes.

He argues that, to be effective, political movements must ally themselves with institutional structures. The mainstream parties are in long-term decline because they failed to deliver what people wanted.

BUT MILLIONS vote when it matters. Jäger acknowledges that in 2020 Joe Biden was elected with a record turnout of 81 million.

Tens of thousands joined the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn and may well have joined Your Party given the chance. The Democratic Socialists of America is now the biggest socialist organisation in US history.

Nostalgia for the old two-party system is both futile and misplaced.

Jäger appears complacent about the threat of fascism. He says that it is a response to the threat of a revolutionary breakthrough. So the conditions for fascism to emerge do not exist.

Instead, he suggests that Donald Trump may be a kind of “Bonapartist”. In the mid-nineteenth century Louis Napoleon Bonaparte relied on the passive support of the French peasantry. Trump relies not on a mass base but on constitutional provisions that give weight to sparsely populated states and allow life-time appointments to the Supreme Court.

Jäger seems to have little sense of how far right leaders can radicalise to the right and create mass movements out of institutions such as Ice.

His conclusion is that we need to “reinstitutionalise political engagement” or remain impotent. This “drawing of atomised individuals back into parties



Anton Jäger makes a distinction between trade unionists marching on Washington with Martin Luther King (top) and the Black Lives Matter movement (above) where he says people lacked obvious political affiliations

and unions may seem nostalgic, authoritarian or simply unrealistic,” he acknowledges. While this project could be based in the world of work where workers still have power, workers are not joining unions, and no longer share the common interests of the past, Jäger warns.

But the left must offer more than attempts at rebuilding the failed parties of the centre. People should get organised, but in ways that further their demands, not thwart and disappoint them.

The current debate between those looking to Zack Polanski's Greens and Andy Burnham's Labour must include a third component—a revolutionary alternative based not only on parliamentary politics but on social movements and working class self-activity.

Hyperpolitics, Jäger writes, is indispensable for understanding the contemporary political scene. And it has clearly struck a chord with some on the left.

But it is Marxism that is indispensable to understanding the polarisation and volatility of the age of polycrisis and the forces capable of forging collective movements from the hyped-up hyper world Jäger describes.



TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM
with Judy Cox

What power do oppressed people have?

MARXISM HAS been criticised for focusing on the working class and ignoring the struggles of groups who are excluded from waged labour.

But socialists have always celebrated the revolts of the oppressed. Karl Marx was inspired by Spartacus, who organised enslaved people against the Roman Empire.

More fundamentally, the revolts of those who face specific oppression—enslaved people, the colonised, women, LGBT+, racialised groups—have always been part of the struggles of the working class.

Solidarity between those in paid employment and those oppressed as colonised or racialised groups was always evident. But it was contested by racism and support for imperialism.

Contested

It was also contested by the oppressed themselves. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon argued that the working class in colonised countries benefited from existing hierarchies.

Fanon called urban workers in Algeria a “pampered social layer”. He argued that urban workers allied themselves to the middle classes who wanted to replace colonial rulers but leave systemic inequalities intact.

Fanon looked to the rural peasantry as the only revolutionary class because it had “nothing to lose and everything to gain”.

Other activists have echoed Fanon's approach. They argue that those in secure, decently paid jobs will identify with the system because they have some material gains.

They develop strategies based on people with precarious jobs or in the informal economy, migrant workers and those unable to access work who they see as more likely to be driven by desperation to fight back.

But destitution alone does not make people revolt. Suffering can instead demoralise people. Those struggling to survive cannot

always develop a sense of collective power.

Resistance depends on a sense of hope that things can be different. And sustained resistance needs organisation and coherent, shared goals.

There is no “underclass” of people who live and work in isolation from the working class as a whole. Most people working in precarious jobs live in families and communities alongside workers in more secure jobs. Many experience different kinds of work in their lives.

The Cockroach rebellion in India recently showed how poor people make sacrifices to send their children to college to become professionals.

Mainstream history often dismisses the power of enslaved people. But uprisings of enslaved people shaped history just as much as the capitalist revolutions in the 18th century did.

The revolution in Haiti in 1791 was a defining moment in history, writes historian Susan Buck Morss.

The philosopher Georg



Rebellions by the oppressed have the power to change history

THE HAITIAN revolution in the 1790s showed that revolts by enslaved people have the power to change history

Hegel developed his ideas about freedom as the enslaved people of Haiti were demonstrating their revolutionary agency under the banner of “Liberty or Death”.

The revolutionaries declared independence from France in 1804. Hegel's great work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was published in 1807.

It includes Hegel's analysis of the master-slave dialectic. Hegel believed that the enslaved can become conscious of the power of their labour as they work. It is the enslaved, not the masters who attain higher consciousness.

Hegel's dialectic inspired radical thinkers and became central to Marxist theory.

Organised

The “working class” is not confined to those working in factories. It includes all those making a living by hustling and servicing the rich.

And when workers strike, it lifts the confidence of all workers and oppressed people to demand more.

Rebellions by the oppressed have the power to change history—to win freedom, civil rights and recognition.

Such uprisings can inspire workers to fight back—but it is in workplaces that we have most power. Revolution is impossible without uprisings against oppression. But its success depends on the power of workers to overthrow and replace the whole system.

READ MORE

● **Hyperpolitics—Extreme Politicization without Political Consequences**
by Anton Jäger, £11.99

● **The New Faces of Fascism**
by Enzo Traverso, £10

● **An opportunity squandered—why Your Party failed**
by Héctor Sierra, isj.org.uk/your-party-failed/

Available at **Bookmarks**
bookshop.co.uk



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

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

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

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

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

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

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

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

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

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

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

INTERNATIONALISM

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

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

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

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

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

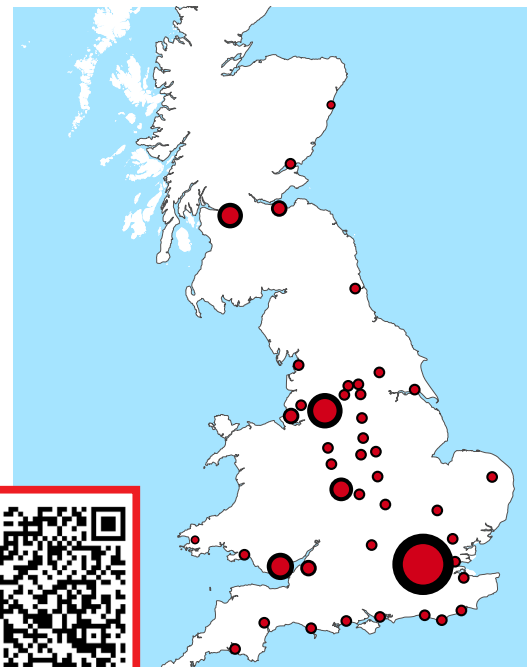
- Bristol
- Devon and Exeter
- Dorset
- Plymouth

East and south east

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

Wales

- Cardiff
- Swansea
- West Wales



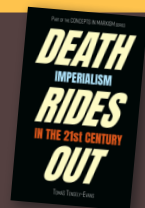
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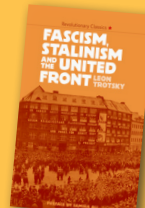
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Major exhibition erases reality of Frida Kahlo's life and politics

by FRANKIE MURDEN

FRIDA: THE Making of an Icon, a new exhibition at London's Tate Modern gallery, tells you little about Frida Kahlo as an artist.

The Mexican painter was one of the most influential artistic and cultural figures of the 20th century, but here she is reduced to almost nothing.

The exhibition begins by patronisingly calling Kahlo a “rule breaker”, “a devoted wife” and “a political activist”.

Though all those things are technically true, they present a sanitised image of a radical socialist—and ignore decades of affairs.

Erases

The exhibition erases the reality of her life and her politics.

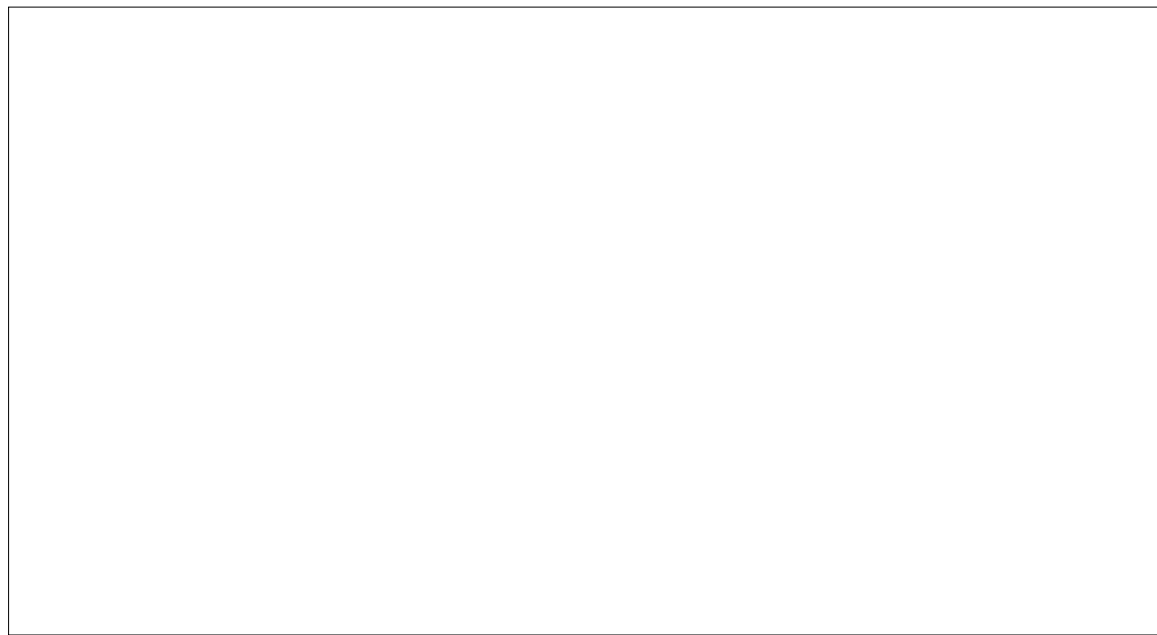
It does present an impressive selection of her works ranging from early experiments to major pieces later in her life.

It is also a surprisingly good introduction to Mexican art from the 1920s to 1950s. But any critical analysis, narrative or necessary context is missing.

Kahlo was a leading member of the Mexican Communist Party.

She spent her life relating her work to the Mexican Revolution—which lasted from 1910 to 1920. She documented her disability—from childhood polio and a near-fatal bus crash—the reality of women's oppression and workers' lives.

She devoted herself to making art that would be “useful to



A MAJOR exhibition of Frida Kahlo's art currently on at the Tate Modern

the revolutionary communist movement”.

Despite this, the only mention of her politics is to say that she was involved in “social activism such as feminism”.

Luckily, her works speak for themselves. The paintings clearly demonstrate the divides that defined her life.

A defining moment was a bus crash in which she was impaled on a metal rod through the pelvis.

Numerous paintings, sketches and a medical corset she'd painted over demonstrate how being a disabled person had a huge impact on her life.

Kahlo's famous self-portraits dominate the exhibit. In *Memory (The Heart)* she is depicted straddling solid land and water.

In *The Two Fridas*, she is seen twice—the European Frida and the Mestiza Frida—representing her father and mother respectively.

In other works, we see the devotion she felt for her husband Diego Rivera—but also the turbulent reality of their relationship.

Then there is her childhood and aspirations before the bus accident and the life she built for herself after.

The exhibition both diminishes and fetishises Kahlo's Mexican

identity—as confusing as she found it herself.

The curators refer to her “adoption of a Mexican persona.” This must have been easy for her—given she was born and raised in the country.

A second part of the exhibition features artworks inspired by Kahlo.

Influential

Some of these are very interesting. And it's important to note how massively influential she has been. But it became repetitive.

There are nearly three rooms ripping off one work, *The Two Fridas*.



Frida Kahlo, Self-portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird

One room, without any analysis, is full of magnets, teapots and t-shirts—you name it—plastered with her image.

It would have been very easy to provide a critique of this crass commercialisation. Instead, this room exits into the gift shop.

It is inspiring to be surrounded by her work. But the Tate has failed her and her work.

It is insulting to see such an incredible woman—a groundbreaking artist and life-long revolutionary—turned into nothing more than a poster.

I left thinking, “Why do women have to be consumable?”

Frida: The Making Of An Icon is on at the Tate Modern, until 3 January 2027. More information available at: www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/frida-kahlo-the-making-of-an-icon

DOCUMENTARY

Dear Gary—We will need more than a wealth tax to deal with inequality

by THOMAS FOSTER

“I BELIEVE that the economy is rigged in favour of the rich,” says Gary Stevenson, in his documentary for Channel 4, “How To Get Filthy Rich”.

Stevenson, a former financial trader turned left wing economist, has built up a large online following with his cries against inequality.

This is the thread that runs throughout the documentary.

Stevenson's fundamental premise is that the rich have been buying up all the assets in Britain—whether that is businesses, homes, land or property.

This concentration of wealth at the top of society

pushes up prices and squeezes everyone else out.

He points to a collapse of “working class and government wealth”.

He cites a statistic that states the richest 56 people in Britain now own as much as 27 million of the rest of us.

Solution

What is Stevenson's solution for this problem? A 2 percent tax on wealth above £10 million a year. This could raise £24 billion a year in tax revenue.

The documentary is a series of interviews with both working class people and the mega-rich.

It is at its most interesting when looking at the first group, asking how ordinary

people are struggling in the current economic climate.

Gary speaks, for example, with a family who find it hard to feed their only child, school children worried about their future and a person living in a van in Bristol after soaring rents meant he could no longer afford his flat.

But among these interviews, he speaks with the mega-rich.

Here a naked class interest is on display.

Stevenson meets English aristocrat and landowner Francis Fulford, who pushes the myth of trickle-down economics. This is the idea that wealth at the top will—eventually—work its way down to the rest of us.

Billionaire and Reform

UK donor Bassim Haidar, comfortably perched in his penthouse next to Hyde Park, threatens to leave Britain if a wealth tax were to be implemented.



Economist Gary Stevenson

Andrew Henderson, CEO of Nomad Capitalist, a company that assists wealthy individuals avoid taxes by moving countries, speaks frankly.

He says, “The world is going to be unequal. Do I think it is entirely fair? I don't think life is fair.”

The issue is that Stevenson fails to adequately challenge these people, who are too often allowed to spout their drivel. And even when he pushes it is unconvincing.

Nostalgic

There are more significant problems. Stevenson remains hyper-fixated on a wealth tax. He is nostalgic for “the golden age of capitalism” after the Second

World War, pointing to the high rates of taxation then.

But he doesn't reckon with the structural features of a system built on the pursuit of profit, such as class divisions and competition between bosses.

It is these dynamics that fuel inequality in the first place.

The documentary, as a result, remains far too focused on the surface layer of capitalism.

It fails to get stuck into the processes that prop up the system as a whole. And these mean that we need to demand so much more than a wealth tax.

How To Get Filthy Rich is available to stream now on Channel 4

IN BRIEF

Bus drivers set to strike over heat

DRIVERS AT eight bus garages in north London have voted overwhelmingly for action over extreme temperatures.

The Unite union members, who work for Arriva North London, voted by over 96 percent for strikes.

Drivers have been asking for years for improvements to the buses including installing air conditioning. Their work has put them at serious risk as cab temperatures soared to the high 30s.

At Cardiff Bus there is also a dispute brewing over heat.

Drivers who stopped driving due to the dangerous temperatures found their pay was docked and they were recorded as absent on their sickness files.

The company said, “We are not able to pay drivers if they do not drive under extreme weather conditions, whether that be for heatwaves or winter storms.”

But the workers were right to take action to protect the safety of themselves and their passengers.

Fight over pay in Great Yarmouth

AROUND 100 of some of the lowest paid workers in the Norfolk seaside town of Great Yarmouth are set to start striking this week.

The Unite union members are bin workers, street cleaners, landscaping workers and grave diggers. They work for Great Yarmouth Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of the borough council.

The workers are paid around 20 percent less than those doing the same jobs in Norwich.

The far right Restore Britain is based in the town. It talks about wanting to reward those who work hard.

But its policies of slashing corporation and inheritance taxes won't help ordinary workers. Nor will cutting benefits that the lowest paid rely on—or pitting migrant and British born workers against each other.

The workers are set to strike on 6, 7 and 10-12 August.

Time is running out for hotel bosses

WORKERS AT Manchester's Kimpton Clocktower Hotel struck last weekend and are set to strike again this Friday to Sunday.

The Unite union members are fighting over union-busting. Owner InterContinental Hotels Group has refused to recognise the union and has suspended two union reps. Unite believes they were illegally targeted for their trade union activities.

Time is ticking for bosses to resolve the dispute as Labour-run Manchester City Council is threatening to withdraw its booking for the Best of Manchester Awards in October.

EXAM BOARDS

‘We should reject this half-baked offer’

by UNISON AQA member

WORKERS AT Unison AQA branch face a choice.

After weeks of strikes, we've been presented with a final offer that our members will vote on.

There has been movement in all the points on our ballot paper. The current offer represents pay restoration for AQA exam board workers at the lower end of the pay scale. AQA has also committed to bringing forward an equalities review of the current pay framework.

AQA bosses have gone from hostile silence to conceding on every point. That's a big win for workers—and we should celebrate that.

But these are signs that we should keep pushing for more, not signs to slow down and accept the deal.

Our strength lies in the action we take, not in the meeting rooms after we call off strikes.

It is not a coincidence that we received an improved offer the week after our longest period of industrial action—when we use our power to demand more, we can make progress.

AQA strikers on the picket line

We must use that strength to win for all our members and in every argument.

Crucially, it means insisting that workers need money in their pockets this year, not years down the line.

We're staring down the barrel of skyrocketing inflation again. The cost of living crisis that will follow will be paid for out of our members' pockets, not those of AQA executives.

We have to say that we won't pay the price.

To do this, we need to reject this half-baked offer. And we need more strikes, not less.

There is a worry that more strikes will result in AQA

withdrawing the current offer, or that we might be letting “the perfect be the enemy of good”.

Bosses trying to convince workers that they should take what crumbs they're offered isn't a new argument.

The reality is that it is workers who keep the lights on, and more strikes will only make that more obvious.

While AQA bosses struggle to make money while office chairs are left empty, we want to draw out the best fighters and give confidence to those on the fence.

And ultimately, we want to win the argument that we not only want pay restoration—but a proper pay rise.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Striking gallery workers furious about job cuts

by FRANKIE MURDEN

WORKERS AT the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) are set to strike for four days during the famous Edinburgh Fringe festival.

The PCS union members are taking action over proposed job cuts.

Alan, a PCS union member at NGS, told Socialist Worker that rather than cutting jobs directly, managers are not rehiring when people leave positions to save money.

“It means about five jobs are being cut out of only about 160.

“This might not seem like much, but the galleries are run by only seven to nine workers at a time. So, a cut of five is actually massive—galleries will have to close.

“The galleries are already staffed at such a low level,” Alan added. “People can't go to the bathroom during their shifts because there is no cover.”

These changes have been implemented by a new management team in the past few years who “want to stamp their authority” on workers.

Alan said workers at NGS are “really angry”.

“It's almost unanimous, people feel strongly about this. It's indicative of what's to come across the arts sector. If the cuts are

successful here, they'll push more through. It's putting the whole sector at risk,” he said.

“It's not only us who'll suffer, the visitors' experience and the collections themselves are at risk.

“Art sector jobs are like gold dust—they're so hard to come by. This means that workers are so desperate by the time they get a job.”

Management is taking advantage of this, Alan said.

The same workers are routinely hired every summer on temporary contracts. Alan said he knew people who have had different temporary contracts up to six times.

He explained that this leads to management changing contracts, terms and conditions without workers realising or knowing their rights. “It's fire and rehire through temporary contracts,” he said.

Some 81 percent of workers voted for strike action on a turnout of 80 percent.

Alan said, “We're hoping we'll have enough workers out to force them to close some galleries. If that happens, hopefully management will buckle quickly.”

■ Visit the picket lines on 7 August from 7pm, 8 August from 8am with a rally at 11am and 12 August from 8am at locations across Edinburgh. Go to pcs.org.uk for more info.

HIGHER EDUCATION

University workers say ‘we should be standing together’

By CAMILLA ROYLE

UCU AND EIS-ULA union members at Glasgow Caledonian University struck together on Tuesday this week.

They are fighting a multi-million pound cost-cutting exercise from bosses which will lead to up to 100 people losing their jobs.

The unions say these damaging cuts are totally unnecessary.

At Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, UCU members are taking action on Friday and next Monday with strikes that will disrupt exam resits.

UCU says that bosses have not honoured an agreement to delay redundancies in the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies and the Scholar online learning programme for school students.

With a reballoon at Heriot-Watt and five weeks of strikes planned at the University of Dundee, there could be coordinated university strikes in Scotland in autumn.

■ Workers at London Metropolitan University rallied last Friday in their dispute over job losses.

London Met had a reputation for making higher education accessible to all, including many students from working class backgrounds. But bosses are trashing this reputation.

Michael was a senior academic mentor at the university who has been made redundant.

He explained to Socialist Worker that he and his co-workers give students—including the most disadvantaged—the support that helps them finish their degrees.

But the whole team has been disbanded and either made redundant or redeployed elsewhere.

“I thought this place represented social justice and equality,” said Michael. “But they've disbanded a team whose sole focus was making sure all students have the same opportunities.”

Michael said workers weren't listened to. The workers suspected that the decision to disband them had been predetermined by management.

He explained that even from a purely financial point of view, the cuts are shortsighted. If students drop out, the university loses tens of thousands in income from their fees.

Some 47 workers are set to be made redundant. The number has been whittled down from the 120 job losses that was announced earlier in the year.

But UCU union branch chair Christina Paine said this is largely through people leaving voluntarily. “A lot of people just couldn't stand the thought of going through it,” she told

Socialist Worker.

Sociologist John told workers at the rally that cuts at universities like London Met would create a two-tier education system that entrenches class divisions in society.

“We must resist and fight that,” he said.

Other speakers at the rally included local MP Jeremy Corbyn, a striker from the Institute of Cancer Research and UCU members from other universities and colleges.

Des Freedman is a UCU member at Goldsmiths, in south east London, who is on indefinite strike over plans for £22 million worth of cuts and a lockout from employers.

He told the rally, “There is absolutely no need for that level of cuts. Management always has one solution—to cut the staff.”

The UCU members at London Met are currently boycotting marking and assessments and are considering what action to take next.

Christina Paine says the situation could be transformed if there was a bigger national fight for higher education from the union though.

“Branches are all fighting on our own,” she told Socialist Worker. “We should be standing together to defend the sector. We can't win this branch by branch.”

Workers win joint fight at Imperial

AT IMPERIAL College in London, members of the UCU, Unison and Unite unions have all voted to accept a new pay deal.

The university workers received a 3.5 percent pay increase, with a minimum increase of £1,500. The offer also comes with two extra days of annual leave and additional parental and carers' leave.

UCU branch secretary Roddy Slorach said that workers feel vindicated for striking last year. “All these things happened because we took 20 days of action all together. We only got this because we fought,” he said.

But while many workers see this as a win, there is still more to fight for. Pay at Imperial has declined by about 5.5 percent in real terms since 2018.

Five unions are now running nationwide consultative ballots over university workers' pay. Members of the Unison and EIS unions have already rejected the 2 percent offer.

NHS

Health strikers in south London slam the bosses

by PAT MEUSEL

UNITE UNION members at the South London and Maudsley (Slam) NHS Foundation Trust walked out last week over pay and conditions.

The workers—electricians, decorators, joiners, painters and plumbers—work at sites including Bethlem Royal, Lambeth, Lewisham and Maudsley hospitals.

“We keep the doors open, the lights on and the water running. If we don’t work, this place doesn’t,” Glenn, the equalities rep at the Maudsley, told Socialist Worker.

“But we’ve got people on this picket who are doing exactly the same job as others on band 5 of the NHS pay scale—except they’re being paid at band 3 or 4.

“And it’s not only that. There are people in other departments who have been bumped up the bands, often without even asking.

Nobodies

“But we’re the nobodies to the trust, so we get nothing”. Last Thursday, around 50 workers rallied at the Maudsley Hospital.

It’s the largest mental health training institution in Britain.

“All the trust does is talk. We feel like it’s one meeting after another,” Luke, the union’s health and safety rep at the site, told Socialist Worker. “So, since we’ve exhausted every other

AROUND 50 striking workers joined a rally at the Maudsley Hospital in south London

avenue, we’ve walked out on strike.

“And there was overwhelming support for it—97 percent voted to walk out. As you can see, the mood here is militant,” he added.

The strikers chanted, “What do we want? Fair pay! When do want it? Now!” as people passing by honked their car horns in support.

Glenn said, “The bosses have been taken by surprise a bit. I don’t think they actually believed us when we said we’d strike. But now that we’re out, everyone’s in high spirits.”

Sharon Graham, general secretary of Unite, addressed the striking workers on the picket line last Thursday.

“The NHS has been starved of resources,” she said.

“The NHS is a toxic merry-go-round of cuts and increasing workloads.

“But, in the face of all that, it’s workers like you who keep hospitals like the Maudsley open.

“It’s not the execs on six figure salaries. The top two earners in this trust earn £400,000 between them. That’s the amount it would cost to solve this dispute.”

Mark, a staff nurse at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust in south London and a fellow Unite member, offered his solidarity to the striking workers.

“We’re balloting over

a similar issue at my workplace,” he told Socialist Worker. “So I’m here today to stand in solidarity with the workers here.

“But we also need to link up all of the struggles across the NHS,” he added.

The workers were on strike until Monday morning. And, if the bosses don’t come back to the table, they are ready to strike again.

“We’re certainly prepared to come out again, until we get what we’re after,” Luke said.

●Support the workers by donating to their strike fund: Ref: CEF strike Account name: UNITE LE/7105L Sort code: 60-83-01 Account number: 20469210

AI DATA CENTRES

Leeds data centre fightback

LEEDS RESIDENTS are fighting back against Microsoft’s planned development of three hyperscale artificial intelligence (AI) data centres.

The proposed megasite, situated at Skelton Grange in southeast Leeds, would house computer servers running constantly to power Microsoft’s AI systems.

Despite Leeds City Council’s approval of the development scheme in April, there is enormous anger over the environmental threat posed by the data centre.

Online

Within two weeks, an online petition has amassed over 22,000 signatures.

AI data centres are known to consume eye-watering sums of water and electricity, as well as causing severe pollution problems.

Lianne, the organiser for the No Leeds Data Centre Campaign, told Socialist Worker, “Everyone’s energy and water bill is going to go up.”

“Animals are at risk of going extinct, and the heat island effect and the noise pollution will make it unbearable to work or live within a two mile radius of the data centre.”

The construction site is less than 100 metres away from a Conservation Volunteer environment centre. Workers here were not consulted about the development plan.

But the build-up of AI infrastructures doesn’t just affect local communities and wildlife.

It has become the primary site of competition between tech billionaires and governments are increasingly aggressive in their interventions.

The Labour government has designated AI data centres as critical national infrastructure. This allows for the fast-tracking of their planning permissions despite obvious environmental problems and local objections.

Microsoft’s AI has also been a tool of the ruling class, who uses it to exploit workers at home and to kill Palestinians abroad.

Activists agreed to bring together trade unions and other political campaigns in opposing the expansion of AI infrastructures.

By broadening the political demands of the campaign and linking up struggles, they can translate the popular anger towards big tech into a local victory.

RAIL

Rail workers strike for safety

EAST MIDLANDS Railway (EMR) workers are on strike over safety.

The RMT union says that the new Class 810 fleet of trains have “a significant number of dangerous faults”.

RMT says that in three instances train drivers have been unable to communicate with each other and dispatchers, putting workers and passengers at risk.

Keir, an RMT rep in Nottingham, told Socialist Worker, “When safety concerns are ignored, there comes a point when enough is enough.

“Our message to EMR is simply—withdraw the unsafe trains, work with the unions, resolve this dispute.

“Until then, our members are taking action.”

Around 30 joined a picket line in Nottingham, 25 in Derby and a dozen at London St Pancras station.

They’ve gotten support from members of the FBU and Unite unions.

The RMT members were set to strike from Saturday for eight days.

■CLEANERS ON Merseyrail outsourced to the private company, Churchill Services, were set to strike this Friday against low pay.

Workers initially asked the company for a pay rise of just 20p per hour, which would cost bosses only £18,000 per year.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

PROSPECT UNION members at the V&A Museum’s storehouse in east London have voted overwhelmingly to strike over pay and conditions.

The collections access officers have slammed “Amazon-style conditions” at their workplace.

Prospect says the workers are denied enough time during the day for breaks, to drink water or to use the toilets.

They backed the strike 100 percent on a turnout of 88 percent to demand two

paid breaks a day.

And workers are demanding that V&A become an accredited living wage employer within 12 months.

This is part of a bigger dispute across the V&A.

Prospect is demanding at least a 4 percent pay rise, time-and-a-half for hours worked on bank holidays and better provision of food for workers on sites.

Across the V&A, some 83 percent voted for strikes, on an 82 percent turnout.

Prospect is set to announce the dates.

HOUSING

East End Homes workers win residents’ support

WORKERS AT East End Homes (EEH) in Tower Hamlets, east London, began another week of strikes on Monday in their fight over pensions.

It follows a week-long walkout by the Unison union members last week.

The workers—administrators, caretakers and housing officers at the housing association—are angry about bosses’ plans to cut their pensions.

EEH bosses want to move the workers from a Defined Benefit (DB) pension to a Defined Contribution (DC) scheme. This would mean the loss of thousands of pounds every

EEH strikers leafletting Tower Hamlets, east London, last week

year in retirement income. Bosses have threatened the workers with “fire and rehire” unless they accept the changes.

But the workers are getting organised as well.

They’ve begun leafletting each and every

one of the nearly 4,000 homes they look after Kerie Ann, the Unison local government branch secretary in Tower Hamlets, told Socialist Worker, “We’ve leafletted at least a thousand homes so far. “And we’ve a plan in

place to make sure every resident gets a leaflet.”

A striking worker said the reception so far had been positive. “When residents hear what the bosses want to do, they’ve been shocked,” they told Socialist Worker.

“And we’ve had residents come out on our picket lines to support us.”

●On Wednesday they were set to picket outside EEH Head Office, 3 Resolution Plaza, E1 6PS, from 8:30am and on Friday, from 9. 30am.

●On Thursday they were set to picket outside the Isle of Gardens Housing Centre, 137 Manchester Rd, E14 3DN, from 8,30am

AS SAUDI ARABIA JOINS TRUMP'S ATTACKS ON IRAN...

AIRSTRIKE ON IRAQ IS MAJOR ESCALATION

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE US war on Iran is setting the region ablaze as it pulls allies into the bombing.

Saudi Arabia—a regional imperialist power allied to the US—joined in the bombing of an Iranian-backed paramilitary group in Iraq on Thursday.

The US-Saudi strikes mark a new phase in the war.

The US claimed the strikes were against “Iran-aligned terrorists directed to attack our forces”.

The Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), an Iraqi paramilitary force, say strikes killed at least 20 of its members last week.

The new phase is a reminder of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003—and how it shapes the region today.

The main beneficiary of the US's failures in Iraq in the 2000s was Iran.

The US and British occupation of Iraq relied on divide and rule between Sunni and Shia Muslims and set up an administration that was dominated by Shia parties.

The West's invasion and stoking of sectarianism laid the ground for the rise of the sectarian Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Isis).

This group originated in Iraq during the occupation. It grew in Syria after the regime of

US-SAUDI ARABIAN strikes on Iraq have killed at least 20 members of the paramilitary PMF

Bashar al-Assad launched a civil war against a popular revolution in 2011.

In 2014, Isis fighters threatened to overthrow the Iraqi government.

Then US president Barack Obama didn't want to put “boots on the ground” after the disaster of 2003 and relied on regional players.

But Iran was a key state in helping

the US fight Isis in Iraq.

The PMF was formed in 2014 out of Shia militias to fight Isis. While officially it is part of the Iraqi army, it is allied with Iran.

Iran used the PMF as part of its “ring of fire” strategy. It backed allies such as the Hezbollah resistance organisation in Lebanon, the Houthis

in Yemen, the PMF in Iraq and the Assad regime in Syria.

At the same time, the regime would avoid a direct clash with the US and Israel.

In the Middle East advanced levels of capitalist development and the decline of the US have fuelled the rise of regional imperialist powers.

In 2010, one of the rivalries was between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which fought proxy wars in Yemen and Syria. China brokered a deal between the two regional powers in March 2023. This was a sign of the influence of China, which supports the Iranian regime.

Today, Saudi Arabia and other US allies in the region have been hit in Iranian counter-attacks because they host US military bases.

They had not joined in with US and Israeli strikes on Iran, fearing it would escalate the war further.

But the Saudi Arabian regime wants to send a signal to Iran's allies, to stay out of the war.

A dangerous logic of escalation is built into the situation.

The US suffered when it signed the humiliating “memorandum of understanding”—and Iran has emerged from the war stronger.

Now, US president Donald Trump wants to ratchet up the pressure on Iran to turn defeat into victory. The US is drawing Saudi Arabia into the slaughter.

In Britain, the new Labour prime minister Andy Burnham has allowed Trump to use British bases for “defensive strikes”.

The whole movement should demand the Labour government stops its complicity in the US war on Iran.

Over a hundred arrested at Defend Our Juries protest

by CAMILLA ROYLE

PALESTINE activists gathered outside Westminster Magistrates Court last Thursday to oppose the ban on Palestine Action as a “terrorist” group.

Campaign group Defend Our Juries (DOJ) planned to set up a stage outside the court. People would then take to the stage and say, “I support Palestine Action and I encourage everyone to do the same.”

It's an escalation of DOJ's defiance to the

Terrorism Act 2000, which bans people from encouraging support for a “terrorist” organisation.

But as activists attempted to set up a stage, cops moved in—arresting 152 people in total.

Chloe told Socialist Worker, “The government has to realise that we are not going to stop. Palestine is being eradicated from the world map.”

More than 3,500 people have been arrested for showing support for Palestine Action since it was proscribed.

The ban has caused chaos in the court system.

An administrative hearing of 1,500 cases was meant to take place last week but has been postponed until 26 October. It's an absurd situation.

Ranil told Socialist Worker, “The government should just bite the bullet and say they were wrong.”

New prime minister Andy Burnham has an opportunity to turn things around. And repealing it would be popular with his voters.

Some 70 percent of



Defend Our Juries action

Labour Party members think the ban is wrong.

But, it is a bad sign that he has kept Shabana Mahmood as home secretary. She has said Palestine Action are “not consistent with democratic values and the rule of law” and appealed to uphold the ban.

The Supreme Court has given permission for Palestine Action to appeal against the ban.

DOJ supporters were not optimistic that Burnham would be any different from Keir Starmer.

Ranil pointed out that Burnham has announced another £8.4 billion for nuclear submarines. “It's more money to kill,” he said.

If the Labour government continues to criminalise opposing genocide and keeps sending weapons to those committing it, people will continue to resist.

Trade unionists will need to be part of that resistance, including by organising in the workplace to defend arrestees.