Remembering Hungary's 1956 revolution

Seventy years ago, workers and student led an uprising in the Eastern Bloc country—and fought the Russians that came to crush it >>Pages 8&9

Can young people change the world?

From Paris to Porto, Milan to Mumbai, youth are on the march. But, asks Rebecca Long, can they win? >>Pages 10&11

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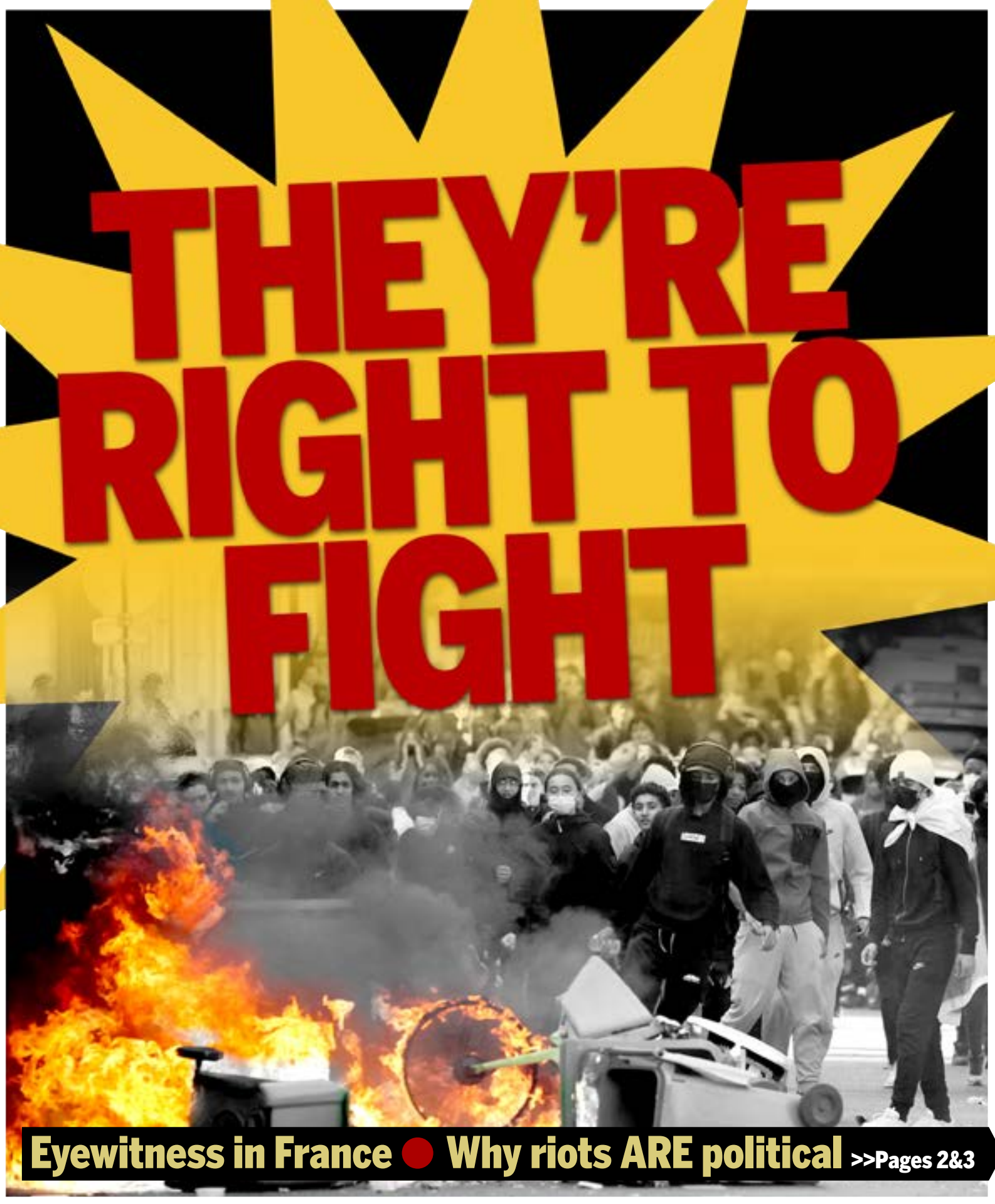
THEY'RE RIGHT TO FIGHT



Eyewitness in France ● Why riots ARE political >>Pages 2&3

WEST BANK

Israeli settler violence surges

PALESTINIANS IN the West Bank say they've "reached a point where we are afraid to even leave our homes".

Amal lives in the city of Nablus, where conditions are deteriorating rapidly as Israeli settlers ramp up attacks. She spoke to Socialist Worker.

The Palestine movement is right to push for a full trade embargo.

>>Page 16

ANTI-RACISM

Unity marches take on far right

ANTI-RACISTS organised unity marches in towns and cities across England and Wales last weekend.

There were marches in Stevenage in Hertfordshire, Carmarthen in West Wales, Cambridge, Oxford, Kent, Essex, Northampton and Lewisham in south London.

The protests were organised by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) alongside Palestine and climate groups, trade unions and other campaigners.

>>Page 4

PORTUGAL

Cops attack housing protests

THE REVOLT over the housing crisis has spread to Portugal.

Police are brutalising protesters in dawn raids on their encampments. On Tuesday morning alone, cops put 30 people in hospital.

But protesters remain determined, reports Rita Pereira.

>>Page 7

STREETS OF PARIS BURN AFTER DAY OF RAGE AT THE SYSTEM

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of France last Saturday. **Camilla Royle** reports from mass demonstrations in Paris. Photos by **Guy Smallman**

The Statue de la République, celebrating the French Revolution, taken over

HUNDREDS of thousands of people raged on the streets of France last Saturday. At least 100,000 turned out in Paris—and 800,000 across the country.

There was broken glass and the remains of barricades all over Paris after young people charged through the streets, torching cars and looting shops as they overwhelmed the police.

The movement started by young people blockading their schools has drawn in university students and workers in huge numbers.

People are revolting against a system that offers them no future and responds with violence when they try to fight back.

In Paris, the crowd alternated between setting fire to bins and bus stops and welcoming firefighters with rounds of applause when they came to put out the flames.

Placard condemning police violence

In the Place de la République square, police used tear gas and water cannons before people even had a chance to march.

The iconic Statue de la République, a symbol of the French Revolution in the centre of the city, was covered in graffiti.

It was dressed in a giant yellow vest, a reference to the Yellow Vest movement that exploded across France in 2018.

The crowds erupted in cries of "Siamo tutti antifascisti"—"We are all anti-fascist". They chanted, "La jeunesse emmerde le Front National"—"The youth tell the Front National to fuck off", in a reference to the previous name of the fascist RN.

Secondary school students Diana and Julie told Socialist Worker, "Some of the schools are crawling with rats.

Heat

"In summer we are dying in the heat and in the winter we are freezing.

"We are against the police. They are tear-gassing and beating us, and telling us we can't protest."

The pair didn't think the movement would slow down now that school holidays have started. "There have been protests every day but this is the biggest one—there is everyone," they said.

Cythère, a supporter of Extinction Rebellion, told Socialist Worker, "The young people managed to do something we couldn't do before—to bring together the fights.

"We have been supporting the movement from the beginning and we offer legal advice.

"But we are not here to protect them, they know what to do."

Groups of people in the crowd came dressed in yellow vests, many of them were too young to have been in the movement the last time.

University student Tess was wearing one. She explained that there had been calls on social media to bring back the movement as fuel prices are now even higher than they were in 2018.

Katya told Socialist Worker, "Our parents protested wearing this. It's a revival."

Some protesters adopted the

The movement began with school students and has spread to universities and workplaces

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national flag and national anthem. But many waved flags of Palestine, Congo or Algeria.

Student Alesio, with an Algerian flag, told Socialist Worker, "The French Revolution is a scam. The bourgeoisie revolted against the aristocracy for their own gain. We need another revolution for equality."

Meeting points across France were advertised on social media. And in many cases, hundreds showed up.

Emma went to Gare du Nord station to join a demonstration at 10am. She told Socialist Worker she worries about the threat of a fascist winning next year's presidential elections and about climate collapse.

"Enough with Emmanuel Macron," she said. "There are two possibilities—fascism or something much better. Right now, it feels like we already have a foot in fascism.

"In 2050 in Paris it will be 50 degrees celsius. No-one can live with this. Something must be done."

Later in the morning, hospital workers were joined by hundreds of students outside their workplace.

Health worker Ines told Socialist Worker, "There are not enough staff and we can't care for our patients. The condition of public hospitals is worse each year."

Ines and her colleague said they had been afraid to come to the protests before but felt that this day was important.

'They didn't give up in 1789, we won't give up in 2026'

Burnout

Another health worker, Amel, told Socialist Worker, "They want to cut the budget by billions. It's a catastrophe. We are already short-staffed and it's leading to burnout.

"Public services are dying and we are against the way the government responds with police violence.

"The media just talks about violence. But the protests are peaceful. It's the police making the tension go up."

She explained that in her faculty they did protest and it helped improve conditions.

Amel said, "Right now we protest, so that people will understand that at some point they need to strike."

Saturday was a day of protest and revolt across France and in other parts of Europe. In Marseille, there was a huge demonstration and protesters invaded the city hall. In Lyon, they set fire to a branch of the tourist office.

Some 400,000 students protested in Italy against fascist prime minister Giorgia Meloni. They have occupied their schools like the French.

Blockading

In Germany, school students have started blockading schools to demand funding for education and oppose conscription.

If the movement of mostly young people combines with the power of organised workers, it could be transformative.

France has seen the beginnings of this. For example, school students visited picket lines at the Tiru waste incineration centre last week and supported striking transport workers in Saint-Denis, north of Paris.

Members of the left wing LFI party marching with students last Saturday

Some of the trade union federations have been slow to join the battle. The gap between strikes is too long. On last Tuesday's demonstration, thousands of union members in Paris marched separately from the students.

But many ordinary workers recognise the need to unite with the youth and deepen the movement.

Next Saturday, marchers will confront the fascist RN at its conference in Orléans.

There are calls for nationwide strike on 5 November. The challenge is to build it in every workplace.

The left must defend riots and looting

POLITICIANS AND the media have launched a witch-hunt after the riots in France last weekend.

The French state has seized on the opportunity to demonise and divide the movement that began with school students blockading their schools.

They claim that some protesters' "legitimate grievances" have been hijacked by "far left extremists" and "criminals".

The BBC's Paris correspondent used thinly-veiled racism to describe the rioters. He said it was "glaringly obvious" that there was a students' movement with "grievances understood by everyone.

"But what's happened is the leaching onto that of a far left agenda and looters from the banlieues"—poor suburbs where black people and migrants live.

If the left doesn't defend the rioters from the state, the whole movement will pay the price.

On Monday, prime minister Sébastien Lecornu asked regional authorities to impose a partial curfew in major cities including Paris.

President Emmanuel Macron has said that rioters will "pay for their crimes".

Demonising looters is an attempt to divide the movement

Repression

That repression will be used against all strikers and workers.

But similar calls have been widespread, including from some on the left.

The Force Ouvrière union federation, for example, has responded with outright condemnation.

It said in a statement, "Nothing can justify attacks on businesses, town halls, public buildings and community facilities.

"Violence and destruction cannot be a response to social difficulties. Nor should they be used to discredit the legitimate demands of peaceful demonstrators, which the government must hear and take into account responsibly."

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the presidential candidate for the left wing LFI party, also distanced himself from the "looting and pillaging". He said on social media, "Whatever the responsibilities of those in power and their incompetence and their violence, we must refuse to take part in actions without political meaning and contrary to our methods."

Mélenchon has blamed the state for the breakdown in public order. He has rightly reaffirmed his support for the demands of school student protesters and solidarity with those facing police violence.

But he is wrong when he says looting doesn't have any "political meaning".

Riots are political. They are an expression of indignation against the rich that is felt by millions of people across France. And they are a revolt against the deep racism that sees young black and Arab people in particular face harassment and violence from the police.

Many of those taking part in the looting will have come from the poorer suburbs of France's cities.

They are told that France is a rich country. Yet their experience is one of growing inequality and poverty that has reached its highest levels since modern surveys began.

They face a system that is rigged against them. It is more difficult for people in poorer areas of France to escape their economic situation than in most other so-called developed countries.

At the same time, young people are also told that the measure of their value and success is having the latest branded clothes and trainers.

Stealing some of those goods is one method they have to redress the injustice they face and to take back some control over their lives.

The widespread nature of the rioting after Saturday's protests means it shouldn't be dismissed as the actions of a small minority, distinct from the "respectable" demonstrators.

Restoring

Some argue that riots will hand the initiative to the fascist RN, as it presents itself as the party capable of restoring law and order. The RN candidate Marine Le Pen is currently leading the polls.

But fascism won't be beaten by slowing the momentum of the movement or by focusing on elections. It will require a confident movement on the streets that can confront the fascists at their conferences and when they try to organise.

As the revolutionary socialist organisation Autonomie de Classe argues, it is the failure by our side to move forward that would strengthen the fascist threat.

Riots are not the same as strikes. They don't have the same democratic and collective nature. They don't directly target exploitation and profit in the workplace. And sometimes they harm ordinary people.

But our criticism of riots is that they don't go far enough, not that they distract from the respectable protests. As the state prepares itself for a vicious crackdown against teenagers who steal a few clothes and trainers, socialists will need to come to their defence. And they will need to spread the call for mass strikes and occupations.

Anti-racist unity demos help build fight against far right

HUNDREDS OF activists mobilised for unity marches against the far right, including these in Oxford

by REBECCA LONG

ANTI-RACISTS organised unity marches in towns and cities across England and Wales last weekend.

There were marches in Stevenage in Hertfordshire, Carmarthen in West Wales, Cambridge, Oxford, Kent, Essex, Northampton and Lewisham in south London.

The protests were organised by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) alongside Palestine and climate groups, trade unions and other campaigners.

More than 100 people came out in Stevenage to join a march put on by SUTR and Herts Not Hate—which organised the town's first anti-racist protest last year.

SUTR activist Caia, said, "It was a really good event. The organising we did in the lead up to it brought the local groups together. It pulled in three times more people than the march last year.

"Stevenage is heavily Reform UK. It has lots of councillors here and now Restore Britain is getting its claws in too. It has been leafleting and its members speak in town every week. That's why we decided to build a march here."

Green Party members, trade union activists, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Extinction Rebellion all joined the march.

We need numbers to stop the far right

Protest

Meanwhile, around 150 anti-racists joined West Wales SUTR in Carmarthen. Trade unionists, Green Party activists and Ann Davies, the local MP for Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru, joined the unity march.

This was the first anti-racist protest in the town since the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Activists are now working to set up a local SUTR group in Carmarthen.

Over 400 joined the unity march in Oxford. SUTR activist Rimaz said, "It was incredible seeing so many people come out. We need to turn up and oppose the fascists wherever they show up—we need to claim our cities as anti-racist."

Oxford students, on the streets for university matriculation, cheered the marchers and joined in chants as they went past.

In Cambridge, activist Jack spoke to Socialist Worker from the 400-strong unity march. "Today marked a crucial moment," he said.

He added that people there were furious about the racist hounding of professor Jason Arday, which drove him to his death this summer.

Threat

"People from all communities, academics, Greens and trade unionists came together against the threat of racism," he said.

Around 200 people gathered in Lewisham, south London.

Anti-racist Lilian said, "We've seen people in black masks marching through Portsmouth and Dover.

"We can't just fight that in ones and twos—we need to fight back as entire communities and entire workplaces and schools. A unity demo helps pull all those people together to talk about how we can fight racism and fascism."

Around 250 anti-racists also came out in Chelmsford, in Essex, 150 in Canterbury, Kent, and 100 in Northampton. In Kent, activists spoke about the importance of coming out again next weekend to counter the far right in Herne Bay.

On the same day, 350 people attended a Together alliance summit in Manchester. Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the NEU educators' union, called for a national march and a music festival against racism next summer.

Sister of former prisoner blames state's lack of care for her death

COLLEEN MADDEN was released from prison on 13 January last year. Just three days later, she was found dead in her accommodation.

The 31 year old mother was routinely released from prison and then recalled.

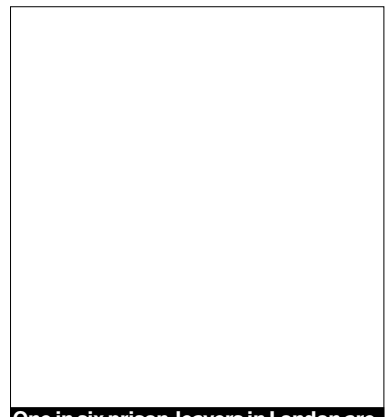
Between September 2024 and January 2025 she was released four times, only to be sent back to prison. Her housing arrangements broke down and probation services couldn't support her in the community.

She was released on New Year's Eve 2024 and sent back to prison the same evening because of problems with her housing. When she was released again two weeks later, she died.

An independent investigation, commissioned by Camden Council, confirmed that Colleen had been living in a tent in Euston, north London.

She felt the "effects of trauma, including from acquired brain injury, bereavements and child removal, street homelessness experiences and instances of violence and abuse across her lifespan".

As a vulnerable woman, she needed appropriate accommodation on being released from prison. But there were a string of "significant missed opportunities" and "uncertainty" over the legal duty for the council to provide housing for her.


One in six prison-leavers in London are released into homelessness

Colleen's sister Angel told the Islington Tribune newspaper, "This case has shown that once you are labelled as mentally ill, or a substance misuse person, or someone who has been in prison, they treat you like an animal. They probably treat animals better."

She added that probation services, the council's housing department and adult social care all blamed each other. "Honestly, she has been failed since the age of 16," said Angel.

An inquest into the circumstances of her death is set to start this week.

Colleen's case is not unique. In the year to March 2025, some 1,413 people in England and Wales died after being released from prison and while they were still being supervised in the community.

The government is now freeing thousands of prisoners through its early release scheme because jails are full.

Less often discussed is the threadbare support that awaits ex-prisoners after leaving prison.

Now probation officers are considering strikes to address a crisis in the system that is failing people like Colleen Madden.

Starting this Monday, the Napo probation officers' union will ballot its members for walkouts over the need for decent pay and manageable workloads.

Young not ‘over diagnosed’ says mental health report

by IAIN FERGUSON

A GOVERNMENT-commissioned review into the rising numbers of people with mental health problems concludes that young people are not “snowflakes” and challenges myths of over diagnosis.

The authoritative study is published just as Andy Burnham’s Labour moves to slash health benefits for young people that the right accuses of being “work-shy.”

The Independent Review into Mental Health Conditions, ADHD, and Autism—known as the Fonagy Review after its author professor Peter Fonagy—was released earlier this month. It says that increasing benefits, not cutting them, improves “mental health and wellbeing, while decreases worsened them.”

It was commissioned in 2025 by the then Labour health secretary Wes Streeting. He had claimed that mental health problems were overstated, saying, “Mental wellbeing, illness, it’s a spectrum and I think definitely there’s an overdiagnosis.”

He and others argued that the huge increase in young people not in education, employment or training (Neets) due to mental health problems could result from lower resilience.

Fonagy unequivocally rejects such claims. Speaking of his work with young people, he writes, “I am in awe of their courage. Young people today are contending with more powerful forces than I ever faced. They are not fragile. They are outnumbered.”

And on questions of overdiagnosis, underdiagnosis and misdiagnosis, he says, “None of this should be taken to suggest that people’s distress or difficulties are not real.

“If anything, the evidence points the other way. The rising numbers coming forward for assessment have not been accompanied by any fall in severity or impairment—those now presenting are no less affected than those identified before.

Diagnosis

“People are seeking answers and support for very real problems, and they are not the problem.”

What then is the problem? According to Fonagy, it’s that the system leans too heavily on diagnosis as a route to help. Rising need and greater awareness are running up against limited capacity.

The alternative, Fonagy argues, is a needs-based system that delivers appropriate help and support when people need it, rather than making support dependent on getting a diagnosis.

This is likely to be welcomed by many mental health service user groups.

Mental health diagnoses are usually based on a much-criticised biomedical model which locates people’s problems in their brains, not in their life experiences.

By contrast, some neurodivergent people may feel concerned by Fonagy’s proposals.

For them, diagnosis can seem to make sense of difficulties they have experienced and can also be a passport to services.

Fonagy’s argument for shifting the focus from diagnosis to need is well-intentioned, but will run up against three obstacles.

First, his welcome call for more investment in preventative mental health services and youth services has little chance of happening. Labour is shifting spending away from welfare to warfare.

Second, his attempts at even-handedness leave his report wide open to cherry-picking. That’s particularly true when he talks about the beneficial effects of paid work. This will be music to the ears of Work and Pensions Secretary, Pat McFadden.

> **Fonagy’s argument is well-intentioned, but will run up against political obstacles**

The truth is that the quality of work is crucial.

Fonagy does not reference the “work is good for you” mantra which underpinned the brutal Work Capability Assessments. These contributed to the suicides of hundreds of disabled claimants.

Nor does he mention the fact that work-related stress currently accounts for more than half of all work-related ill-health in Britain.

Uncertainty

Third, Fonagy provides a list of the key drivers of the current mental health crisis. These include more uncertainty and insecurity, and more evaluation and comparison, with greater competition in schools and workplaces.

He adds that the reduction in youth and community provision has led to greater isolation and loneliness, and reduced opportunities for rest and recovery.

It’s a good list. But his conclusion is that “No single cause explains the increases observed.”

In fact, these factors are connected. They can be traced back to the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s, to the imposition of austerity after 2008 and to the environmental and pandemic crises of the 2020s.

In other words, the current crisis of mental health is at root a crisis of capitalism. That, however, is not a conclusion that a government-commissioned report was ever likely to arrive at.

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

RIGHT WING talk of a ‘pampered’ generation is a myth, but Labour panders to it (top) **The report’s author Peter Fonagy** (left)

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

CHALLENGE FAR RIGHT RADICALISATION

THE RECENT ITV Exposure documentary on Reform UK shows it is right to call it a racist party.

Reform UK is not only saturated with racism—it is the glue that binds together its support.

Several councillors and wannabe councillors were recorded by an undercover journalist during the May elections.

They fantasised about groups of armed white men attacking the homes of black and brown families and rounding them up for deportation.

One spoke about how he wanted to sexually assault a female Reform UK candidate.

In 2024, a similar undercover investigation by Channel 4 caught a Reform UK canvasser saying the army should use migrant boats as “target practice”.

Then, Nigel Farage pledged that he would improve vetting procedures and clean out the “few bad apples” in his party. But Reform UK has gathered more and more rotten apples since.

The question now is how much this expose will hurt Reform UK’s vote. The far right party has been dogged by financial scandals and revelations of its bigotry for years, yet this doesn’t seem to have reduced its support.

And, if Reform UK does start to decline, where will its voters go?

Many may return to the Conservatives, who are climbing out of record unpopularity. The Tory party edged ahead of Reform UK for the first time since May this month.

New polling from Ipsos showed that 35 percent of voters see the Tories as the main challenge to Labour, while 32 percent think it is Reform UK. This shows that Reform UK’s voters are splitting and the Tories have moved further to the right.

Reform UK also faces more competition on the far right, particularly from Rupert Lowe’s Restore Britain. Lowe has openly championed Daniel “Tommo” Thomas’s fascist thugs.

This puts pressure on Reform UK to radicalise rightwards.

And that can allow the Tories to win back some right wing conservatives who went over to Farage.

The result is a redistribution of votes on the right.

But competition between right wing forces pulls them rightwards over immigration.

Islamophobia, racism and anti-working class policies are cornerstones of the Tories as well as of Reform UK. If the far right voters of Reform UK flood back to the Tories, we can expect very little change.

With the fascists gaining a foothold on the streets and Restore Britain encroaching into parliament, the source of danger shifts. Anti-racists must build in their local areas, as well as joining national networks to take on this national threat.

Anti-racism must be imbued with a more radical anti-fascist edge if it is to challenge the far right and beat it back for good.

DEFY TRANSPHOBIC GUIDANCE

GUIDANCE FROM NHS England last week says that trans+ people should be excluded from single-sex wards.

Previously, they were allowed to use facilities that matched their gender.

It is another in a series of attacks on trans+ people since a Supreme Court ruling in April last year that stated that a woman is defined by “biological sex”.

If the guidance is implemented, it will deny trans+ people the access to healthcare they are entitled to.

As campaign group TransActual points out, trans+ people already avoid seeking medical care due to fear of discrimination. This guidance could force them into unsafe situations, including corridor care, and risk outing and humiliating them.

It could also force health workers to become the “gender police”, which will mean some cisgender people are also interrogated by staff.

Defiance is key to beat back this attack. Health workers and their unions should get organised at work to say that they won’t implement this harmful and unnecessary guidance.

ANALYSIS
ALEX CALLINICOS

Europe's leaders bow to Trump's bullying

ANDY BURNHAM turned out the Irish Guards in full regalia—bearskins, scarlet tunics, and all—to greet Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky at Downing Street on Wednesday last week. But, for all this show and Burnham's pledges of "unwavering" support for Ukraine, he was careful not to take sides in the latest row between Zelensky and Donald Trump.

This balancing act sums up the precarious position of European capitalism. Its rulers talk up war with Russia under Vladimir Putin to justify higher military spending, but remain dependent on president Trump and US power. They are feeling the disruptive effects as competition among imperialist states—themselves included—heats up.

Trump is open in his hostility to Zelensky. He posted last Sunday, "with all of the money that Europe is famously giving him... he doesn't want to end this war and probably never did." But, despite the two presidents' celebrated clash in the White House Oval Office in February 2025, the conflict isn't about personalities.

There are two main reasons for Trump's attitude—one strategic, the other short-term. First, his administration wants to end the growing antagonism that has developed between US and Russian imperialism over the past 20 years.

Though White House strategy isn't exactly coherent or consistent, the Trumpists have a vision of the world carved up into regional spheres of influence for the most powerful imperialisms —the US, China and Russia. As far as the administration is concerned, if Washington's European allies feel threatened by Russia, it's up to them to step up military spending to deter Moscow. The war in Ukraine has become an obstacle to a settlement with Putin, which might open up business deals profiting the Trump family and their cronies.

Second, one way in which this strategy isn't coherently pursued is that Trump, like all his predecessors since 1945, still sees the world as his oyster. Hence the war against Iran that he started alongside Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu back in February. Of course, this war has gone very badly for them. The Iranian regime held together, using its mastery of the precision-strike technology of drones and missiles to hit back.

Domination

Now Iran's allies, the Houthis in Yemen, are deploying that same technology to threaten the Saudi dynasty's domination of the Arabian Peninsula. This is to keep the price of oil and refined petroleum products, such as diesel, high. This pushes up inflation and makes governing parties unpopular, like Trump's Republicans who face mid-term elections next month.

Meanwhile, with the fighting on the ground in Ukraine more or less stalemated, both sides are increasingly reliant on precision-strike technology. The Ukrainians have been hitting Russian infrastructure, including refineries and data centres. Russia is attacking civilian and military targets in Ukraine.

Trump is relaxing or not implementing sanctions against Russia in exchange for diesel oil. He's also pushing Zelenskyy to stop hitting Russian refineries. He hopes these moves will cut diesel prices before the mid-terms. Any fall in prices would probably be short-lived, because the source of the energy crisis is in the Middle East.

The Europeans, including Britain, have taken over funding Ukraine's war effort. But the US retains what a Ukrainian official called a "triple American monopoly" of intelligence, ballistic missile interceptors and the Starlink satellite network and its military component Starshield. You can't fight a missile and drone war without this kind of network. Starshield has mysteriously slowed down for Ukrainians these past few days. Of course, Starlink owner Elon Musk protests his innocence.

This conflict leaves the European imperialisms high and dry. They want Ukraine to continue fighting in the belief this will keep the terrible Russian bear at bay. In fact, given that they are encouraging Ukraine to be more indiscriminate in its attacks on Russian territory, the effect could be the opposite—escalation towards nuclear war.

But this terrifying prospect simply underlines European capitalism's dependence on US imperialism for its security. Europe remains politically fragmented, with its leading states grappling with domestic paralysis and, in France and Britain, bond markets nervously eyeing their debts. So they will continue to tug their forelocks in deference to Trump, however much he bullies and insults them.

LETTERS

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Zionism is racism—the left must defend the Greens

THE PASSING of the motion at the Green Party conference, identifying Zionism as a racist ideology and committing the party to supporting a single democratic Palestinian state, is proving to be a test of the anti-imperialist left.

The tide of fury from the mainstream political parties and the media is no surprise.

The motion represents a break from the defensive response that marked Jeremy Corbyn's years as Labour leader.

It centres the racist character of Zionism and advances an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial vision of a democratic Palestinian state in which all citizens are equal.

What is surprising, indeed shocking, has been the response of sections of the pro-Palestine, anti-imperialist left.

The motion has been dismissed as a diversion, divisive, or a tactical mistake.

This reflects the pressure of electoralism divorced from the movement on one hand, and elevating "unity of the movement" above politics on the other.

It is a mistake to counterpose the necessary unity of the mass movement with advancing a clear political position on Zionism and a one state solution.

The motion reflects a militant politics at the base of the movement but also strengthens and extends that militant base.

As the attacks have mounted, there has been a rally in defence of the Greens. Good.

But that now needs to extend to an unqualified defence of the motion itself.

The left needs to go onto the ideological offensive.

We need to instill confidence on the back of the motion, not act as a brake.

Rob Ferguson
Secretary of Dorset Palestine Solidarity Campaign (personal capacity)

Reclaiming the streets

LAST MONDAY night over 1,000 people gathered in Glasgow against sexual violence.

Protestors demanded funding for services for victims of assault and addiction and an end to violence against women.

The demonstration was energetic and radical, with speakers from the Scottish Green Party, trade unions to Women Against The Far Right and the Indian student movement.

Links between misogynistic violence and the rise of the far right and between war spending and the cutting of vital services were made clear.

The crowd was unafraid of shutting down the streets in the name of Jane Doe—who spoke out against sexual violence at Cornell University in the US—and against police violence.

The latest Police Scotland figures show that recorded sexual crimes increased by 10 percent last year, but protestors refused to let this be weaponised by racist hatred.

It was inspiring and essential. This was an angry radical demonstration that would not be intimidated by a small number of racists. Instead women proclaimed, from Cornell to Glasgow, we are all Jane Doe and we can fight.

Eva Shepherd
Glasgow

Illustration: Tim Sanders

Egypt's airstrike on Sudanese miners

SOME 72 workers were killed in a deadly Egyptian airstrike on the Sudan-Egypt border last week.

Over 100 are seriously injured and thousands have been displaced. One witness said, "There are no words for what we saw."

This is the second attack this year on the Jabal al Uqaydat gold mining area, 23 miners were killed in a similar airstrike in June.

Both the Egyptian and Sudanese states claim the area of the Halaib Triangle, which is particularly rich in mineral resources.

But this is all about getting ahead in the fight for resources. The struggle between powers has fuelled a conflict which has killed more than 200,000 people.

This war is primarily a counter-revolutionary struggle between Sudan's Rapid Support Force (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Force (SAF) and against the Sudanese people. But Egypt's involvement shows the dangers when regional powers jockey for control of the region and its resources.

Faye Young
Liverpool

Support targeted rep

CAMPAIGNERS FOR member democracy in the trade union Prospect are calling on members to support a suspended rep.

Risa Tan is recognised for massively growing their branch. And they were one of the most combative speakers at Prospect conference this year.

Risa is now facing two disciplinaries and has been suspended on precaution.

Democratic Prospects is asking branches to support Risa and build a democratic, fighting union that protects members' right to organise.

Democratic Prospects Steering Committee

Cops attack housing protests in Portugal

Protesters stay determined as crisis continues, writes **Rita Pereira**

THE REVOLT over the housing crisis has spread to Portugal.

Police are brutalising protesters in dawn raids on their encampments. On Tuesday morning alone they put 30 people in hospital.

Inspired by housing protests and encampments in Spain, activists had set up camp in Praça Dom João I Square in Porto, Portugal, to fight for affordable housing.

Portugal's conservative government introduced policies last month that favour landlords and make evictions easier, while young people struggle to find anywhere they can afford to live.

Since the start of the encampments police have used force to remove protesters' tents. Last Thursday they injured 37 people in Porto, leaving two in a critical condition.

Videos show activists linking arms and desperately shouting "peaceful, peaceful" as officers attacked them. The violence has sparked widespread anger across Portugal.

Most of those involved in the encampment were young people and university students.

Vasco, a protester and student at the University of Porto, told Socialist Worker, "I joined the protesters last week. It's a peaceful protest, with people who clean the space all the time.

"Police messed with the wrong people—they thought it would be another exhibition of brutality. But they found a movement that will resist until the last breath, if necessary.

"Porto was the city that resisted absolutism, that started the biggest clashes against fascism decades ago, and that still resists Lisbon's greed nowadays. It won't be some police who scare us or discourage us from our commitment to freedom."

For many young people "working hard" is no longer enough to secure a decent home. On average, Portuguese people can only afford to leave their parents' home at age 29.

Portugal's national minimum wage has been reported at around €820 a month after tax, while renting a one-bedroom flat in Porto can cost up to €1,215 a month. Rents have risen by more than 100 percent over the past decade.

Armed police pose a real danger

Since last Thursday, cities across Portugal have seen demonstrations. Last Saturday, trade unions and left wing parties held a national demonstration. Tens of thousands joined with major mobilisations in Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon.

Eduardo Couto is the leader of the Left Bloc party in Aveiro, as well as a social educator and LGBT+ activist. He told Socialist Worker, "What we're seeing in many cities in Portugal are diverse generations united by a single cry—we cannot live like this anymore.

Resistance

"Police brutality has only deepened the public's solidarity with the cause.

"These are remarkable days in our country, days of great resistance against the cost of living that is suffocating everyone. And this is just the beginning."

Organisers have pledged to continue the encampments in Porto, which have expanded to the capital, until their demands are addressed.

The movement is demanding an end to evictions where people have no alternative accommodation, a review of rental laws, rent caps, restrictions on housing acquisitions by investment funds, more public housing and a programme to bring vacant properties back into use as homes.

Police violence will not solve the crisis or silence a movement that is growing across Portugal and Europe.

The task now is to channel this frustration. Trade unions must organise strikes and further mass demonstrations to unite workers, students and tenants in a common fight against evictions, rising rents and police repression.

PROTESTERS GATHERED at the encampment in central Porto before the police attack last Thursday. The encampment was one of an increasing number across Portugal

Cockroaches live as diaspora speaks

by **YURI PRASAD**

THE INDIAN state crackdown on the Cockroach youth movement last week led to mass arrests, protest bans and vicious attacks by militarised police officers.

New Delhi cops toured protest sites in the city last weekend in an attempt to intimidate the thousands of demonstrators demanding the chief election commissioner resign.

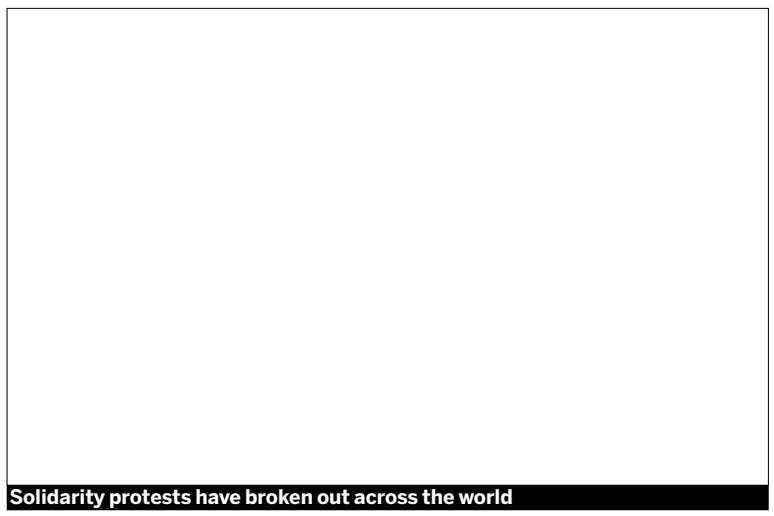
Gyanesh Kumar has overseen the removal of around 133 million people from India's electoral roll, with a disproportionate number of them Muslims.

Activists say the far right BJP government of Narendra Modi is attempting to "steal democracy". They are prepared to resist—even if that means mass jailings.

Leading youth campaigner Aameen Amitoj told Socialist Worker that global protests in solidarity with Indian Cockroaches has given the movement heart.

Last week hundreds of Cockroach supporters rallied outside the Indian High Commission building in London, greatly outnumbering Indian far right opponents.

Many protesters were Indian students in Britain who readily identify with the new movement.


Solidarity protests have broken out across the world

"For the longest time, it was thought that the Indian diaspora was completely hijacked by the far right groups, such as the fascist RSS," Aameen said.

Scamsters

"But with the kind of solidarity we've seen, the diaspora have shown they understand that what has been happening for the past 12 years under the Modi regime is not right," he said.

"This is a regime of scamsters. It puts on a garb of ethno-nationalism only to hide its deep-rooted corruption, its rottenness at its very core.

"The solidarity protests give us hope because we realise we have comrades across the world. The internationalisation of the youth and student movement is so important.

"The kinds of unjust regimes we confront everyday are being called out by our comrades, our brothers, our sisters and our queer folk friends everywhere.

"The flame that we students in India lit is now burning bright across the world."

HUNGARY 1956—REVOLUTION FOR WORKERS AND AGAINST STALINISM

Factories, offices and universities struck and Hungary was ablaze 70 years ago this month. **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** tells the story of Europe's forgotten revolution

A STONE'S throw from Budapest's trendy ruin bars where students drink, there is a building like any in your town.

Seventy years ago, a clash between Hungarian students and police outside it marked the beginning of one of Europe's most significant—and forgotten—revolutions.

A 17 year old student recalled that when they gathered outside the Radio Kossuth building on 23 October 1956, "no one thought it would end in revolution".

But by the following morning, "an atmosphere of revolution reigned over the city". Hundreds of thousands of people were building barricades and fighting pitched battles against the secret police and tanks.

And workers struck, seized control of workplaces and set up grassroots bodies.

Hungary's rulers claimed the mantle of Vladimir Lenin and the Russian Revolution of 1917, but the reality was very different. The Russian Revolution, devastated by war and isolated internationally, had degenerated.

By 1928, the state bureaucracy—led by Joseph Stalin—had developed into a new ruling class.

The Stalinist regime destroyed the last vestiges of workers' democracy and unleashed terror. Its goal was to compete economically and militarily with the West and that meant accumulating capital from workers.

After the Second World War, Russia imposed this "state capitalist" model on its new satellite states in Eastern Europe.

When Stalin died in 1953, its ruling classes were facing a crisis which split the bureaucracy. A "conservative" group wanted to maintain Stalin's methods, while "reformers" wanted to ease repression. Their fight was about how best to exploit workers.

In Russia, the "reformers", under Nikita Khrushchev, won the power struggle.

The new Russian leadership replaced the old Hungarian prime minister Mátyás Rákosi with the "reformer" Imre Nagy.

Nagy was himself ousted by Rákosi in 1955. But then Khrushchev then toppled Rákosi, and installed his henchman Erno Gero in 1956. Khrushchev denounced Stalin's methods and the "cult of personality". This ideological confusion for Eastern Europe's rulers created space for wider questions.

Lenin had described what made a "revolutionary situation". It had to be "impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change".Splits at the top would be "a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth". Lenin also said that the lower classes had to be determined not to live in the old way.

> **Revolutionary situations have to make it impossible for the ruling class to maintain their rule**

Both were true in Hungary in 1956. On 23 October, students planned a protest in solidarity with Polish workers. At 12.53pm, the music suddenly cut out on Radio Kossuth.

THE HOST read out a communique from László Piros, the Minister of the Interior. "In order to assure public order, the Ministry of the Interior is not permitting any public meetings or demonstrations until further notice," she said.

But at 2.23pm, the music stopped again. "László Piros, the Minister of the Interior, has withdrawn the ban imposed on public meetings and demonstrations," the newsreader told listeners.

He added that Communist Party first secretary Erno Gero "will speak tonight at 8pm". But thousands of ordinary people had other plans.

Shortly before 3pm, university students gathered in front of the statue of Petofi, a Hungarian revolutionary from 1848.

Péter Veres, president of the Writers Association, slammed party leaders for "obstinately organising themselves to restore Stalin's and Rákosi's regime of terror".

He read a programme which demanded political and economic reforms. When Veres stopped speaking, the protesters did not disperse. The crowd of around 50,000 people marched on parliament.

Workers celebrate the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Budapest (above) **One of the hundreds of revolutionaries massacred by Soviet armies** (right)

Workers finishing their shifts joined them. By 8pm, over 200,000 people were on the streets.

Several flash points that evening radicalised the movement.

The students had issued a Sixteen-Point Manifesto which demanded the "immediate withdrawal of all Soviet troops".

The students cheered Nagy when he appeared but whistled him down when he told them "the historical situation was complicated and everyone should go home and wait for developments".

As Nagy spoke, Gero took to the airwaves. "Workers!—the question now is whether we want a socialist democracy or a bourgeois democracy," he said.

Erika Kornélia Szeles, a 15 year old freedom fighter and martyr of the revolution

The strikers determined their voices will be heard

24 October at the United Electric factory, which employed 10,000 people.

One young worker at the plant told the Observer newspaper, "After work, we saw the students demonstrating and joined in.

"On Wednesday morning, the revolt began in our factory. It was unorganised and spontaneous. The young workers led by the way and everyone followed them."

By the next day, workers' councils and factory committees were spreading through Budapest's workplaces.

Workers set up District Workers' Councils. Within days, delegates from 24 plants held a Parliament of Workers' Councils of Budapest. The delegates resolved that, "The supreme controlling body of the factory is the workers' council democratically elected by the workers."

The councils also took up political questions and played an important role in fighting the Soviet military.

The second largest centre of workers councils was Miskolc. On 27 October, Radio Miskolc announced, "For two days, the town of Miskolc has been under the leadership of the workers' council and student parliament."

In many places, the councils formed "national guard" militia to defend themselves from the Soviet forces and security forces.

Hungary was in a situation that Lenin had described as "dual power"—political power lay with both the Nagy government and the workers' councils.

The workers' councils were taking over vital services such as supplying food. But most people saw their role as pushing Nagy further, rather than setting up a new form of government.

There were intense political debates inside the workers councils.

The most advanced demands came from Miskolc. The president of the city's council argued, "The government must propose the formation of a Revolutionary National Council based upon the workers' councils".

But that was not the majority view across Hungary. Sándor Bali, a working class militant who had been a Social Democrat and Communist party member, was a leading figure in Budapest. He argued, "The Hungarian working class developed these workers' councils quite spontaneously. We are well aware that they cannot be political organisations. We know that the workers' councils will become organs directing our economy."

THIS POINTS to a contradiction in all revolutions. Even when people engage in revolutionary acts, they do not easily abandon their faith in better leaders. The Hungarian workers' councils had echoes of the Russian soviets in 1917, which debated the same questions. But there was a key difference.

In 1917, revolutionary socialists who wanted workers to take power were a minority—but they were organised. The Bolshevik party was able to provide leadership at key points.

In 1956, there was no revolutionary organisation. That tradition had been buried under years of Stalinist dictatorship. The debates were cut short by counter-revolution.

Nagy managed to get Russian troops to withdraw from Budapest. But Russian troops began amassing on the border.

The Russian leadership feared that Nagy was going too far—and the far greater threat of the workers' councils.

On 1 November, Nagy played his last card. He announced that Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact military alliance and become a neutral country. On the same day, Budapest workers' councils agreed that they would call off the strike.

Three days later, Budapest woke to the whizz and crash of artillery fire. Over 200,000 Russian troops and 2,000 tanks crushed the revolution.

The new government promised that the workers councils would have a role in governing. But they arrested the entire Central Workers' Council on 11 December. The new regime, led by Nagy's deputy János Kádár, never returned to the repression that existed before 1956. And it raised working class living standards.

Despite its defeat, the Hungarian Revolution reasserted the idea that socialism is based on workers liberating themselves.

But it is another reminder that, if you want revolution to win, you need to build a revolutionary organisation now.

A soldier whose armband signals that he has joined the freedom fighters (below)

GERO GAVE the demonstrators a choice—either the regime or its overthrow.

And they decided. Thousands marched on the giant Joseph Stalin monument—and tore it down.

Another crowd marched on Radio Kossuth and demanded it broadcast their demands. At 10.30pm, a delegation went inside to negotiate and was snatched by the AVH secret police. The crowd tried to storm the doors. Suddenly, the AVH opened fire with machine guns. A murdered protester lay in a pool of blood.

The revolution had begun. The next day, protests and strikes spread across the major towns and cities. The repressive instruments of the state fractured. In Budapest, many of the 1,200 police officers joined the revolution.

The Hungarian military, made up of working class and peasant conscripts, was largely paralysed. The Third Army Corps did go into battle. Its commander used Russian MiG fighter jets to attack the crowds in Tiszakécske and Kecskemét, murdering hundreds of protesters.

Gero requested Russian tanks be sent to Budapest.

Within 72 hours, there was a mass insurgency. In Budapest, young people, including school children, fought in the streets. Soldiers turned their guns on the Russians.Nagy was swiftly appointed prime minister on 24 October. The Nagy government hoped to restore the bureaucracy's legitimacy by granting limited reforms. But it was also under pressure from emerging workers' councils.

The first workers' council was set up on

"The government was under pressure from workers' councils

ON THE streets of Kathmandu, in Nepal, last year. The rebellion burned down parliament and overthrew the government

CAN YOUNG PEOPLE CHANGE THE WORLD?

Paris is ablaze while New Delhi smoulders, and every day brings a new youth revolt. **Rebecca Long** explains why the young are at the forefront of resistance—and how their dreams can come true

Teenagers in France have brought the system to its knees, battling vicious police, occupying their schools and even organising to take on rising fascism.

An estimated half a million joined protests across the country in a single day last week, and more is to come.

The government is in disarray and seems to have no idea how to respond. It is so fragile that it could collapse at any time.

Meanwhile, in India, a revived Cockroach movement, led by students, is back on the streets. The mass campaign that began in opposition to corruption in education now fights the right's attempt to tamper with the right to vote.

It has already inflicted more damage on Narendra Modi's government than decades of pallid opposition by the mainstream parties.

From Albania to Argentina, and from Colombo to Casablanca, recent years have seen an explosion of young people's anger. But what is it that's special about young people? And what is it that is making them radical?

THE repeated failures of neoliberalism are a big part of the explanation. In the 2020s, young people increasingly feel like they have no future.

The planet now burns every summer. Services are slashed while arms budgets bulge. And the promises of a bright future are long gone.

The cost of living is rising while wages are pitiful—that's if they can even find a job. The lucky few are likely to be in part-time roles or on zero hour contracts, and working well below their skill level.

In Britain those that go to university emerge with debts of around £50,000. They will spend the rest of their lives repaying them.

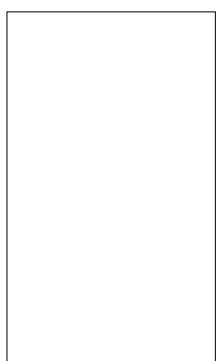
Young women are told that if they work hard enough, they can smash through the "glass ceiling" and make it to the top.

But in reality women, who now make up the majority of university students, are simply taking on the majority of that student debt.

And when they join the workforce, they find that women's pay and conditions remain stuck in a previous era.

For the young, there's little hope of getting on the property ladder—so rip-off, privately-rented flats are for life, not just for your twenties. And without pensions or savings to fall back on, the future for young workers is bleak.

Mainstream politics barely recognises these issues as problems, let alone produces solutions. Instead, they blame younger generations, calling them "lazy" and "snowflakes". Young people feel like they have no voice in the traditional halls of power. This drives them towards the front lines of both suffering and struggle.



On the streets in Albania last week

Long before neoliberalism's crisis, capitalism already failed the young. And we know that historically many of the biggest confrontations with the system have been led by them.

Under-25s often have more room in their lives for activity than older generations. They tend to have fewer responsibilities and more time and energy, freeing them to take part in struggles and campaigns. The decades of drudgery, exploitation and political betrayal don't weary them the way they do many older people.

> **Under-25s are divided by politics, of course, but also by their class**

But it's not inevitable that crisis pushes young people to radical places, or even to the left at all.

Large numbers of teens and young adults, especially men, are moving to the right. Online figures, such as Andrew Tate, offer them an explanation for why they feel so adrift, and tell them that their lot in life is not their fault, but society's.

Those trapped by this narrative locate the causes of their misery in completely the wrong places, blaming women and blaming the left, rather than the neoliberalism and political class that are really responsible.

In Germany, for example, around a quarter of young men plan to vote for the Nazi AfD party, according to recent polls.

That's proof that political polarisation happens in both directions in periods of crisis and uncertainty.

THE FAR right thrives on a sense of hopelessness, but instead of being crushed by misery, many young people have dreams about what society could be like.

The climate movement, for example, during the 2010s, was driven by young people and school students who refused to let their future be burned by fossil fuel-hungry capitalists.

For them, there was no other option than to try and make change. The only alternative was to inherit a dystopian world.

And that same spirit is alive in the fight for LGBT+ rights. Young people who insist that we do not need the oppressive and restrictive gender roles of modern society have led this movement.

As well as standing up against deeply entrenched homophobia and transphobia, they dream of a new society, with new ways of living and loving.

The questions of Palestine and imperialism, and the threat of fascism, remain some of the biggest mobilisers of young people today.

So, it is hardly surprising to see the students in France wearing their keffiyehs on the school blockades while chanting their hatred of Marine Le Pen.

For them, and for millions of others, all these questions have come together. They are all products of a hated system.

Yet despite the way they are depicted, young people are not a class, and certainly not a monolith. Simply being young and caring about politics doesn't give a group any inherent social power.

Under-25s are divided by politics, of course, but they are also divided by their class backgrounds. Oppression too has an impact.

The French events have highlighted that brilliantly.

School blockades began in the poor banlieues suburbs, led by some of the poorest and inevitably the most racially diverse students. They then spread across the country to encompass even some elite universities.

Many on the barricades were quick to admit that while conditions in their school were poor, it was those in the suburbs that really bore the brunt of the government's neglect and police brutality.

So, even in wealthier areas, the school strikers said they were fighting for those at the bottom first and foremost.

The government has long understood the value of race and class divisions.

During the 2023 riots against police violence, Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin denounced the youths in blatantly racist terms.

"Personally, I use the word ensauvagement and I repeat it," he said, effectively calling those on the streets "savages."

In France, we again see polarisation, with around 47 percent of people under 35 saying they support the radical left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, while 22 percent back the fascist Le Pen.

These political and class divides mean that it should be obvious that young people cannot change the world alone. Luckily, they don't have to.

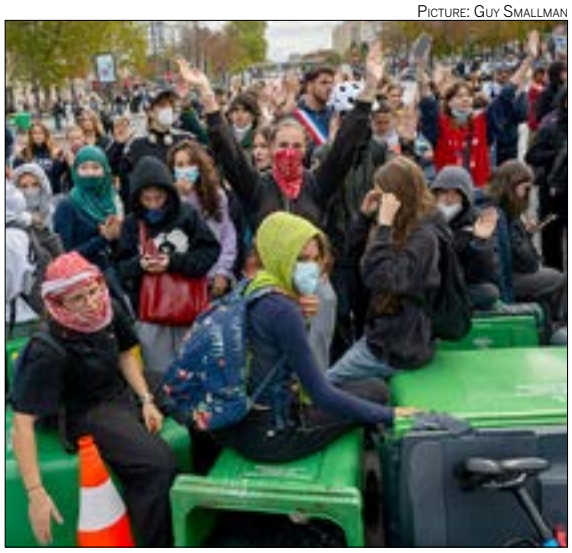
Millions of older workers in France, and well beyond, share their disappointment and rage. They know what it is to be promised the world but given nothing.

For them, the young rebellion has rekindled their hopes and their dreams.

It has shown that struggle opens a world of possibilities.

That is crucial because it is workers, through their ability to halt production and choke the flow of capital around the world, who do have social power.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



Demonstrating in France last week (top) **Cops arrest Cockroach protester in India** (above) **'We ask them for rights, they take them away from us. We will take them ourselves.' says the placard** (below)

SOME compare the current student protests to those of May 1968, when French students rose up in anger over their conditions.

Crucially, the rebels then managed to pull some young workers with them.

That began a process that ended in some 10 million French workers striking for two weeks in support of the students' demands—and adding their own.

It ground France to a halt and even forced the president to flee the country. Young people across the world today have the potential to bring about even deeper change if they can again ignite the working class.

Student movements nowadays represent people from a much broader range of backgrounds than those of 1968.

Many are themselves from working class families, and some cut their teeth fighting against racism and police harassment.

By rejecting the naturalisation of capitalism as the only way for us to live—and embracing revolutionary hope—young people can inspire older generations to join in their struggle.

That means connecting the issues so vital to young people to those of the wider working class.

And it means bridging the gap between economics and politics that the capitalist class imposes on us.

Students bursting out of their schools and campuses can inspire the working class into solidarity—and action of its own. That is the chance for real change that the rebellion of the young represents.

READ MORE

- **India—a Cockroach monsoon** Interview with Aameen Amitoj in International Socialism journal 192
- **What's behind the 'Gen Z' rebellions?** by Camilla Royle Socialist Worker article, 10 October 2025

TEACH YOURSELF MARXISM
with Judy Cox

What is power and how do you get it?

WHAT GIVES someone power? Wealth is one obvious answer—but wealth inequalities interact with those based on gender, race, age and authority within institutions.

Relationships are not based on free and equal individuals. They are shaped by assumptions derived from wider society.

But those seeking to obscure wealth inequalities in the US after the Second World War associated power exclusively with formal decision-making and voting. They argued that power was diffused throughout society.

This view was sharply challenged by C Wright Mills in his book, The Power Elite (1963). Mills argued that power is centralised in the hands of corporate CEOs and media bosses.

This meant that "some men come to occupy positions in US society from which they can look down upon, so to speak, and by their decisions mightily affect, the everyday worlds of ordinary men and women."

FOUCAULT'S IDEAS are still influential today

Monopolised

In the 1960s, Michel Foucault developed his hugely influential analysis of power. He focused on the "infinitesimal mechanisms" by which power is exerted in relationships, over bodies and in institutions such as asylums and prisons.

He denies that power was monopolised by rich and influential elites. Instead, he analyses the "multiple forms of domination that can be exercised in society".

Foucault describes these multiple forms, while missing the underlying causes.

He analyses the discipline imposed on workers by their managers. But he provides weaker explanations for why those workers continue to turn up for work.

Foucault is right that a "web of microscopic, capillary power had to be established at the level of man's very existence" to transform people into cogs in the machine.

But focusing only on microscopic mechanisms of power draws attention away from the society which generates them.

Karl Marx understood an individual's power is derived from this wider society. He wrote, "the power which each individual exercises over the activity of others or over social wealth, exists in him as the owner of exchange values, of money".

Power can't be reduced to having lots of money. But it comes from the relationship between those who own the means of producing wealth and those who have no choice but to work for them.

Marx describes the naked power that helped birth capitalism. "In actual history," he wrote, "it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, violence, play the greatest part."

Once capitalism was established, another form of power developed. Marx described this as "the mute compulsion of economic relations which seals the domination of the capitalist over the worker".

Marxist theorist Søren Mau describes this economic power as the "impersonal, abstract and anonymous form of power" embedded in economic processes. This compulsion, he writes, is just as brutal, unremitting and ruthless as open violence.

> **Power can't be reduced to having lots of money**

Choices

Capitalism still relies on the violence of the state. But we are not marched to work at gun point—we are compelled to work by the economic system.

The capitalist system is driven by competition to accumulate profits. The minority who own and run the world reinforce their power through systemic oppression and hierarchical institutions which perpetuate inequalities.

These inequalities and hierarchies are deeply embedded in capitalist society.

Repressive power is rooted in the economic relationships of capitalism. It stunts our choices and robs us of control over our lives. But it gives us a different power—the power of resistance.

Resistance takes many forms—a Jane Doe who speaks up about sexual assault, a student who walks out, a demonstration, a strike, a revolt.

Resistance can challenge every mechanism which perpetuates the power to humiliate, coerce and violate.

But to eradicate repressive power, we need to use our collective power against all inequality and the whole system.

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
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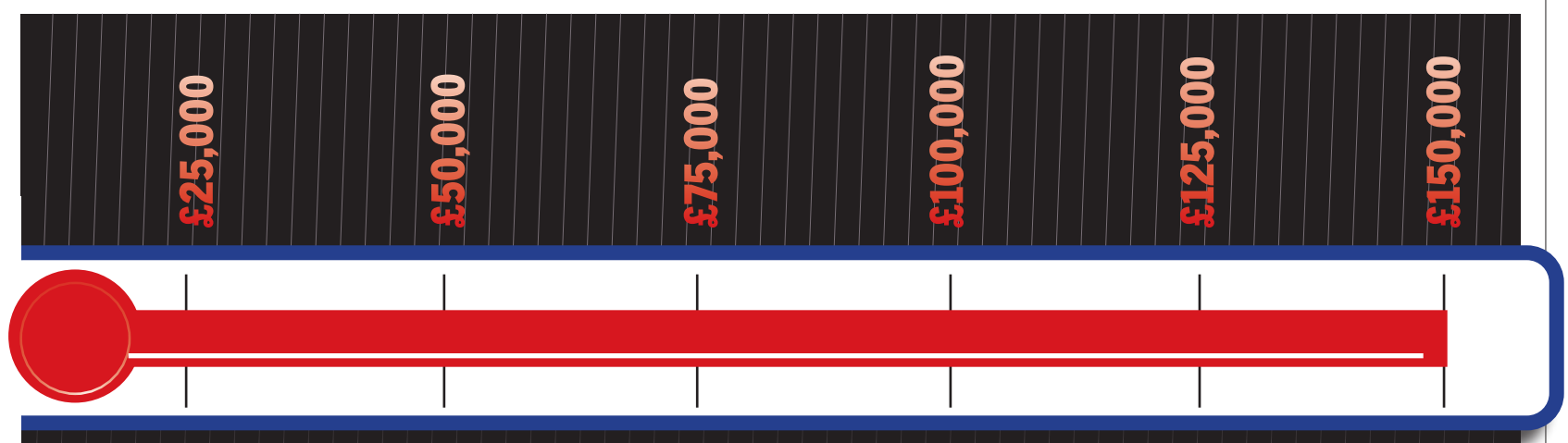

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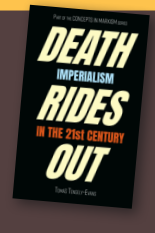

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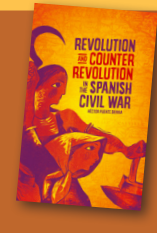

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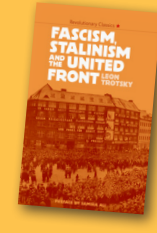

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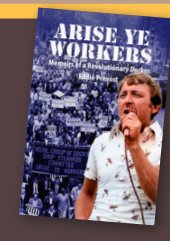

Arise Ye Workers: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Docker
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Digger's budget would have been better spent on climate solutions

by NICO LI WEI TIAN

SAVAGED BY critics and neglected by theatregoers, Alejandro G. Iñárritu's Digger is a disaster film in more ways than one.

It follows Digger Rockwell, an oil baron, played by a hammed up Tom Cruise, as he navigates his way through a climate crisis after his oil rig explodes in Greenland.

But if you were thinking this was just another self-congratulatory, eat-the-rich sermon delivered from Mount Hollywood, Digger hides a trick up its sleeve.

The film's premise, revealed at the end of the first act, is that we are in fact watching the rehearsal of a big-budget play, titled Fossil Fools, satirising Rockwell's life.

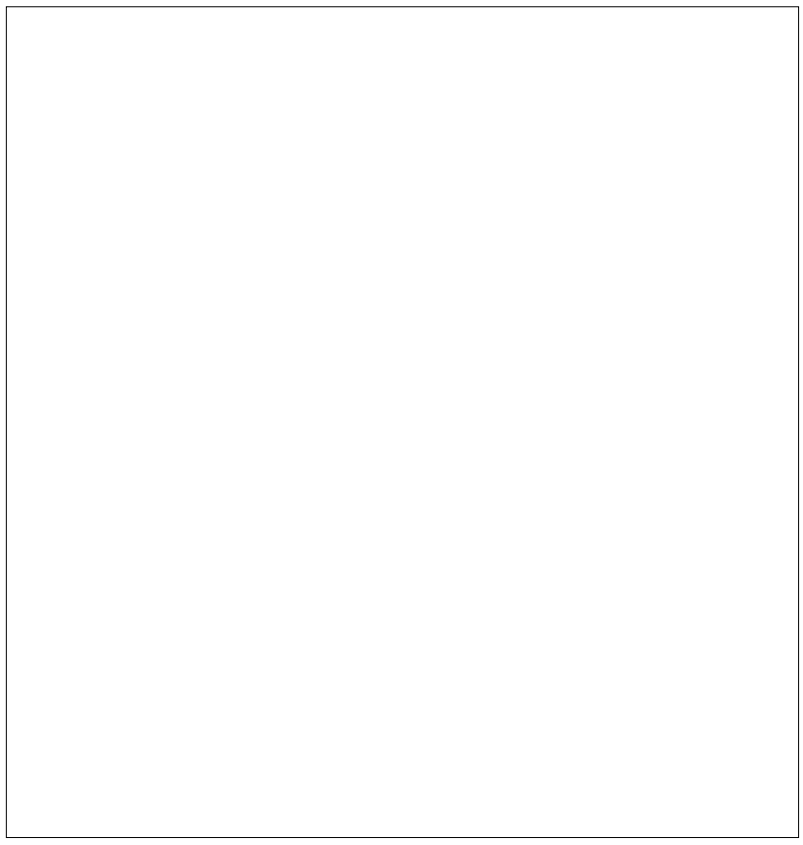
Ruins

Cruise actually plays Curtis Markson, an actor who is portraying Digger decades after the rig exploded and left the world in ruins.

Digger then functions on two levels. The first is aimed at the fossil fuel billionaires and their political representatives.

The second at the genre of contemporary political satire, and by extension, the film itself.

The film's framing device cleverly pre-empts any potential criticism—if you find its dramatic narrative unconvincing and its comedy cringe-inducing, well, that's the point.



TOM CRUISE as Curtis Markson as Digger Rockwell

Digger is the final film released by Warner Bros before it was acquired by billionaire and Donald Trump ally David Ellison.

While the film derides the super rich and the Christian nationalism of their far right friends in the White House, the subjects of its mockery are ploughing ahead with radically restructuring the media landscape.

Digger replicates this dynamic with the revelation that the theatre production is owned and produced by Rockwell's nephew.

At the end of the play, the audience erupts into applause at Digger's downfall before filing out of the theatre into a dystopian world wrecked by climate catastrophe.

Buried under layers of irony, this seems to be Digger's ultimate message, a bitter nihilism towards what the ruling class has done to our world, our art and ourselves.

Cynical

But if audience reviews or ticket sales are anything to go by, unlike their fictional counterparts, audiences in the real world were not exactly elated by this cynical reflection of themselves. In fact, they did not show up at all.

Iñárritu first conceived Digger over a decade ago. It might have seemed inspired then, but in 2026, we no longer need fiction to imagine climate change's devastations.

Art in the era of climate catastrophe must go beyond passive reproductions of real world violence and inspire actions that can deliver us from a reality of death and destruction.

Digger's eye-watering budget of $180 million would have been much better spent on real solutions to climate change than some self-absorbed didactic exercise.

Digger is in cinemas now

BOOK REVIEW

The Redskins—the fusion of music and politics in the 1980s

by DAVID MCKINSTRY

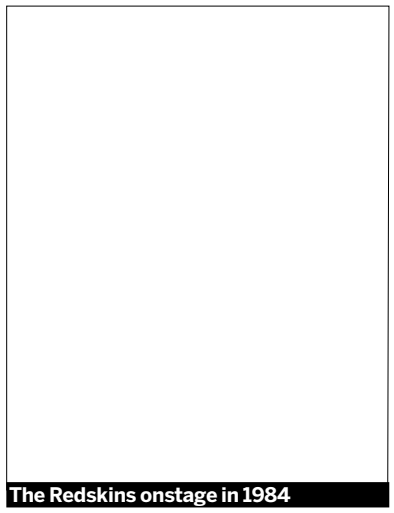
AN IMPORTANT study of the seminal 1980s left wing band The Redskins was released this month.

Gregor Gall's Marxism in Music—Constructing a Communist Contra-Culture with The Redskins, Rock 'n' Roll and Revolution shows how they injected a much-needed revolutionary socialist message into Thatcherite Britain.

The band introduced young people to socialist politics, playing over 250 gigs between 1982 and 1986, of which a quarter were benefit gigs for striking miners.

Gall's book captures the zeitgeist of the era and the cultural and political environment into which the band inserted themselves.

This was an era of mass unemployment under a government that was hell-bent on seeking confrontation with trade unions and embarking on imperialist adventures with the Falklands War in the south Atlantic.



The Redskins onstage in 1984

The band's first single, Lev Bronstein, emerged in 1982. Its title referred to Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky's birth name, and signalled its musical manifesto.

However, it was the follow-up, Lean on Me, released the following year, which reached number three on the independent charts, and marked the band's breakthrough into the pop mainstream.

Idealism

Gall provides a very good analysis of the band's attempts to mix politics with pop music during the 1980s.

He makes the broader observation that it is difficult to use music explicitly to convey left wing messages—even during a decade when pop music was more overtly political and left wing.

Two of the band were members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Their 1986 album Neither Washington Nor Moscow included fragments from talks by SWP founder Tony Cliff among the songs.

In his thorough research, Gall reminds us of the band's refusal to get involved in Billy Bragg's Red Wedge project.

Despite its political idealism, Red Wedge was, nevertheless, an unsuccessful attempt to turn Britain's youth culture towards supporting the Labour Party and its diluted form of social democracy.

Regardless of the difficulties involved in using three-minute pop songs to convey political complexity, The Redskins made some highly danceable political pop.

Songs such as 1984's Keep on Keeping On, which supported the miners' strike of 1984-85, filled dance floors while also serving as a political anthem for left-leaning young people during that period of working class crisis.

If you want to be reminded of The Redskins, the band that aimed to "sing like The Supremes, walk like The Clash", then Gall's book is an excellent starting point.

Marxism in Music—Constructing a Communist Contra-Culture with The Redskins, Rock 'n' Roll and Revolution by Gregor Gall is available now

UPCOMING

BECOMING AMERICA—HOW SCIENCE SHAPED A NATION
From 23 October 2026 until 25 April 2027, Science Museum, London

MARKING 250 years since the signing of the US Declaration of Independence, this landmark exhibition uncovers the science that shaped and was shaped by land, peoples and power.

It explores the scientific undercurrents running through a momentous period of history from the 1760s until the first US presidency in 1789.

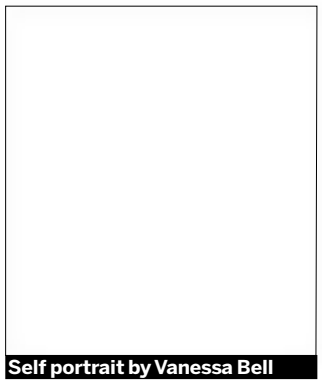
■For more information go to tinyurl.com/scienceshapedamerica

INSIDE BLOOMSBURY
From 12 November 2026 until 11 April 2027, Tate Britain, London

THIS MAJOR exhibition features the work of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant—two of the most celebrated British artists of the 20th century.

As core members of the Bloomsbury Group, their work had a significant influence on the course of art and literature in Britain.

Through vivid portraits,



Self portrait by Vanessa Bell

still lives, landscape paintings, decorative works of furniture, ceramics and textiles, the exhibition explores the extraordinary relationship between the artists, a creative partnership that spanned over 50 years.

■For more information go to tinyurl.com/tatebloomsbury

GRENFELL
From 24 October 2026 until 24 January 2027, The Box, Plymouth

ARTIST AND filmmaker Steve McQueen's poignant film installation "Grenfell" offers a stark reminder of the Grenfell Tower fire in which 72 people tragically died.

The 24-minute film underscores the ongoing fight for justice for those who lost their lives.

Filming the tower before it was covered with boarding, McQueen sought to create a permanent record so Grenfell would never be forgotten.

■For more information go tinyurl.com/grenfellmcqueen

TRANSPORT

TRAMS

Tram strikers up the ante to derail the bosses

TRAM DRIVERS in Nottingham are escalating their strikes over pay as the bosses withhold a pay offer.

The GMB union members have planned a further week of walking, making the total to 25 days of strike action in the lead up to Christmas.

Those on strike include drivers, ticketing staff, control staff, engineers, cleaners and office workers.

They are striking over pay, as management refuse to budge from a 3.3 percent pay offer.

They are demanding a minimum of 4.1 percent.

They are set to strike on Thursday and Friday of next week, 30 and 31 October, 2, 13-14, 20-21, 27-29 November and 4,-6, 11-13, 18-20, 24, 26-27 and 31 of December.

RAIL

Rail workers strike over unsafe plans

RMT UNION members working as train managers for Chiltern Railways struck for 24 hours this Saturday over safety concerns.

It was the third time workers have walked out in this dispute.

Bosses have failed to guarantee a second worker on board the proposed East West Rail line.

This less safe method, known as driver only operation (DOO) is intended for the new £7 billion route.

This will link Oxford to Cambridge and Milton Keynes.

NORTH SEA

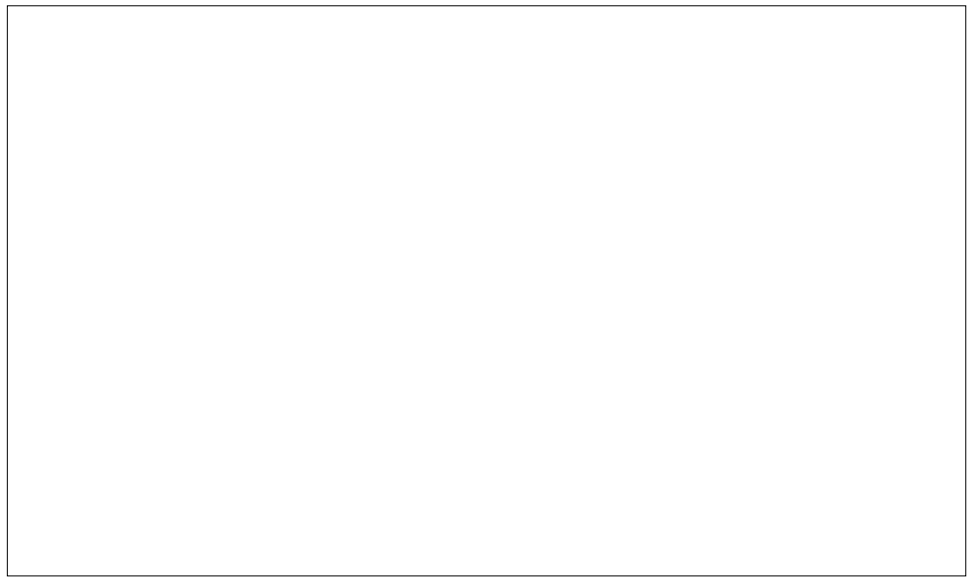
Oil workers plan walkout

OVER 160 offshore oil rig workers were set to strike over sinking pay on Wednesday.

The Unite workers' strike has the power to grind the Charlie oil rig to a standstill—and the entire Forties Pipeline System in the North Sea. This pipeline supplies around a third of both the UK's gas and oil.

The 24-hour strike is an escalation of their dispute with company Apache. They rejected an offer which would have meant a real terms pay cut. If their pay demands are not met, they plan to strike again on 4 November.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES



Workers struck during the busy Edinburgh fringe festival period

'Gallery victory shows our power'

by FRANKIE MURDEN

WORKERS AT the National Galleries of Scotland have secured a victory after hard-hitting action over the busy Edinburgh Fringe festival this summer.

Around 160 PCS union members across four galleries in Edinburgh struck in August over cuts that would have slashed at least five positions.

"It's definitely a victory and it feels good," PCS member Alan told Socialist Worker.

"We got management to agree to minimum staffing levels and to consult the union on any changes to working conditions."

Bosses also agreed to create more accessible breaks for workers.

"This should help us with our health and safety concerns," Alan explained.

Workers also won agreements on the recruitment process and fixed-term contracts.

This was needed since many of the workers were hired on temporary contracts and rehired on contracts with worse terms.

"This has definitely shown people the power our union has," Alan said. "It shows that when we go out on strike, management will listen to us and in the end, we will win.

Threat

"Even the threat of a strike will have a lot more power now, because they know we can shut the galleries down. They can't run them without us."

Scottish public services minister Ivan McKee is planning sweeping cuts to public sector spending as he aims to close a £5 billion gap.

"I do think it has surprised people," Alan added. "But I think there will be other battles to come, there's definitely more cuts to come."

"There's cuts coming to the gallery next year," he said. "But hopefully this victory means we'll be sitting in a strong position not just to fight for ourselves, but to join up with other people across the sector.

"Now workers in the art sector can see that we can win."

PCS members and workers in the art sector at the V&A and Tate galleries in London have also struck this year.

Tate workers won pay improvements and the return of subsidised meals in the canteens.

V&A workers in London are still fighting, with new strike days announced for 29 and 30 October.

PENSIONS

Disabled worker faces poverty due to privatised pension chaos at Jobcentre

>>continued from page 16

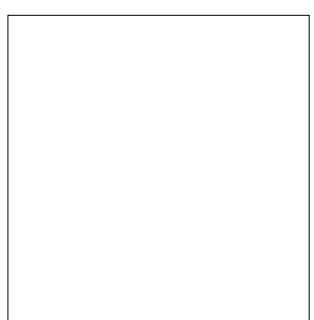
portal doesn't work so I don't know whether I can afford to partially retire.

"And I don't know that I'd get the payments if I did.

Income

"I'm potentially working full time longer than I have to because I can't risk not having an income or having to depend on loans."

The PCS union is demanding that the pension scheme is brought back in house.



PCS wants the pension scheme brought back in house

Steve said, "We've got a campaign at the moment to bring it back in house.

"I think the new Labour government has made favourable noises.

"But it's not happening."

He added, "There's no reason why it shouldn't be straightforward.

"You pay in a certain amount and you expect to get a certain amount out."

HEALTH

MATERNITY

Mothers and babies at risk, warn senior NHS managers

STAFF SHORTAGES are having such a devastating impact on services that up to 20 maternity units in England must shut—or mothers' and babies' safety will be put at risk.

Matthew Hopkins from the NHS Alliance group of managers says centralising childbirth services is now "inevitable" in the wake of a series of maternity scandals.

He argued that smaller maternity units were "unsustainable" because of a widespread lack of obstetricians and a recent sharp rise in the number of women needing a caesarean section.

Unsustainable

Many of the units most at risk are in rural or coastal areas, where staffing is particularly challenging, he told the Guardian newspaper.

"We are calling for a thorough appraisal of maternity services and where they need to be located because the current configuration is not fit for purpose," Hopkins said.

"Difficult decisions lie ahead—consolidating maternity services to support safer, more sustainable care."

But Hopkins' solution may compound the problem of understaffing, not solve it.

According to the Royal College of Midwives, NHS England is already short of some 2,500 full-time midwives, with rising numbers quitting the job citing stress and low pay.

And reports earlier this year showed that newly qualified midwives are being pushed into lower paid work outside the NHS because they can't get jobs at graduate-grade.

Centralising maternity services does nothing to solve this core problem, but might create the illusion of better services.

Yet for mothers and babies, travelling long distances to get proper care, often with grossly inadequate public transport, is itself a risk.

It means they are less likely to receive adequate monitoring and support.

The real way to ensure an end to the scandals of dangerous maternity care is to improve funding so that more posts are created. And pay must rise too, if we are to ensure that qualified and experienced staff stay in the job.

Closing down local services will take us no closer to those real solutions.

LEEDS

Marching on together in Leeds

Leeds NHS workers in third week of indefinite strike

OPERATING theatre assistants employed at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust began their third week of an indefinite strike over pay on Monday.

The Unison union members took 40 days of action over more than 18 months before escalating their dispute.

They are in a fight with health bosses to be moved from band 2 to band 3 on the NHS Agenda for Change pay scale.

Theatre assistants are rightfully furious that they are being kept on the lowest NHS pay band—despite carrying out crucial clinical work, keeping operating environments safe and sterile and supporting surgical teams.

The lowest-paid theatre assistants at the Trust receive just 21p more than the legal minimum wage.

Over 100 NHS trusts in England have already regraded theatre assistants to a band 3.

If the strikers worked just 20 miles away at Calderdale Royal Hospital in Humberside, they would be being paid at the higher rate for the same work.

Jude Mckechnie

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITIES

Goldsmiths strike is solid—but where is the national union?

by **CAMILLA ROYLE**
in south London

UCU UNION members at Goldsmiths in south east London have been on indefinite strike since 8 June against bosses who seem determined to trash the much loved university.

Management want to make £20 million worth of cuts and have put 269 workers at risk of redundancy.

The union members decided to move to indefinite strike after 100 percent of their pay was deducted for taking part in a marking and assessment boycott.

It is now one of the longest university strikes in British history, rivalling University of Brighton UCU's 129 days of action in 2023.

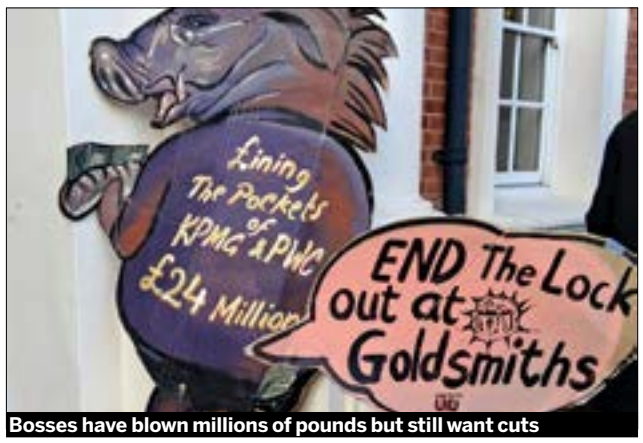
"We are still here, we are still holding out," said striker Amanda on the Monday morning picket line.

She told Socialist Worker, "We are trying to save the college from itself. Goldsmiths has always stood for creativity being groundbreaking and risk taking. We have always had a reputation for going into the unknown.

"That's how you develop society. If you stop doing that at universities the whole of humanity is at risk."

Amanda added that bosses had adopted a kind of "medieval" tactic of trying to starve people out, but that they seemed surprised the strikers had lasted so long.

UCU members at Goldsmiths have rejected two offers from bosses. The first proposed to delay the start of the redundancy process until later this academic term, the second was a proposal to delay it until January.



Bosses have blown millions of pounds but still want cuts

Workers say that the university has splashed out millions on lawyers and consultants during its redundancies and restructures.

Exhausting

Another striker told Socialist Worker, "If we hadn't done this from the start we would be in a far worse situation by now. Yes it can be exhausting, but seeing everyone striking together warms the heart.

"This is the reality of what it takes to change management's minds. We have to hold the line.

"The support from students has been incredible," he explained. "It's in their interests that we save as many jobs as possible. They are seeing the arguments."

Goldsmiths students and workers have held regular student-staff solidarity assemblies with the next one set to take place this Wednesday.

They are demanding bosses open the books and show them the justification for cuts. They say the university management has a history of financial scaremongering and pessimistic predictions about its finances.

Goldsmiths is one of several universities where UCU members are striking for long periods. But university workers are asking where their national union is.

UCU members at Goldsmiths and others have called on the UCU to launch a trade dispute with the secretary of state for education to address the crisis hitting the sector. The union's congress in May agreed to launch a nationwide dispute over jobs.

But the union leadership has been slow to implement any of this, leaving branches like Goldsmiths to fight alone.

■Donate to the Goldsmiths UCU hardship fund at goldsmithsucu.org/support-fund/

...and the same question is being asked elsewhere

STRIKES ARE set to continue this week at the Universities of Nottingham, Edinburgh, Dundee, London South Bank University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

On Monday, students in Dundee led a picket line of over 100 people on a spontaneous march to the new principal's office.

UCU members there began a fifth week of action against cuts.

Angela Scott is the fourth principal during the two year-long financial scandal at the university.

Demand

Students went to the principal's door and demanded she come down to the picket line to speak to the strikers. She did.

At Edinburgh, students and striking workers were set to rally on Wednesday against planned cuts at the Edinburgh College of Art, which forms part of the university.

Bosses plan to close courses in performance costume, textiles and jewellery making.

UCU members have declared a new dispute at the University of Sunderland, which could lead to potential industrial action unless bosses back down.

SCHOOLS

There's ill feeling in Ilford

NEU UNION members at Oaks Park High School, in Ilford, east London, are set to strike for two days from this Thursday.

They are demanding an end to the victimisation of Bill Stockwell, a union rep and the secretary of Redbridge NEU.

In addition, strikers want reductions in their workload and adherence to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

Management has so far proven impossible to negotiate with, so NEU members are making their voices heard by walking out.

Last year, the same school was found liable for subjecting a support worker to discrimination over their disability, forcing them to work in school during the pandemic.

And five years ago, it faced extensive strikes after dismissing a union rep.

Meanwhile, workers at Villiers High School, in Ealing, west London, are striking again on this Wednesday and Thursday after senior management continued to ignore their demands.

The NEU union members, who also struck last week, are furious about pay, health and safety, management practices and workloads—and the victimisation.

Exposed

Managers slashed one striker's pay by around £7,500, while another worker had theirs reduced while on maternity leave. Exposed asbestos in IT classrooms was only removed during the summer after strikers included it in their demands.

The school has £2 million in revenue reserves and refuses to spend it on the staff, students or buildings. But it does have the money to spend on private security with body cameras to intimidate strikers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On the picket line in Camden, north London

Parking bosses must pay penalty for low pay

TRAFFIC WARDENS in Camden, north London, are entering their fourth week of an eight-week strike over pay and conditions.

The Unison union members are employed by private contractor NSL, part of Marston Holdings, rather than Camden council itself.

They are demanding a £2 an hour pay rise, seven extra days of annual leave and sick pay from day one.

Currently, traffic wardens only get 20 days annual leave—the statutory minimum. That's despite working a massive 42.5-hour working week, almost a day longer than other council workers.

Labour-run Camden council had the opportunity in January to bring the parking contract back in house. Instead, the council extended it until 2030.

As a result, traffic wardens have been forced to take on their employer to fight for conditions that other council employees already enjoy.

Every trade unionist, socialist and campaigner should rally round the strikers.

■Solidarity picket, Monday 26 October, 7-10am at 13-15 Guilford St, WC1N 9YP (nearest tube Russell Square).

■COUNCIL WORKERS have sent a clear message to Barnet council, in north London, that they want an end to second-class employment conditions.

The Unison union members at Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet, are both employed by the Barnet Group, a company wholly-owned by Barnet council.

They voted to strike last week, with 88 percent voting yes on a 55 percent turnout. Unison is demanding action over poverty pay and inferior terms and conditions.

The workers plan to walk out for 24 hours on Tuesday 27 October.

Unison is demanding improved annual leave, sick pay, working hours, overtime rates, a fair pay structure and access to the local government pension scheme.

Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet were once council services. Moving them outside direct council employment has left workers without the same contractual protections and benefits as their council colleagues.

■Please email your message of support to contactus@barnetunison.org.uk

HOUSING

East End bosses are behaving like gangsters

WORKERS AT East End Homes (EEH) have now been on strike for over 70 days to defend their pensions.

Bosses are trying to slash workers' longstanding pension scheme arrangements in ways that could see some workers lose up to £9,000 a year in retirement benefits.

Workers in the long-running dispute have now received a letter from EEH informing them that if they do not consent to an inferior contract they will be dismissed on 31 December.

That's just a day before new legislation against fire and rehire comes into effect.

Promised

Workers who transferred from the council to EEH when it was set up 26 years ago were promised their pensions would be safe. The chief executive officer of EEH, Daniel Killian, now wants to renege on this, risking the retirement futures of these essential housing workers.

No worker should be threatened with losing their job for defending their pension rights.

Everyone should get behind the EEH strike.

■Visit the picket line, 8.30-10am most strike days at East End Homes head office, 3 Resolution Plaza, London, E1 6PS.

■Send solidarity messages directly to the strikers to Tower Hamlets Unison branch secretary kerie.anne@towerhamlets.gov.uk

■Spread the word by sharing Tower Hamlets Unison strike updates

Socialist Worker

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PALESTINIANS SAY THEY ARE AFRAID TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES AS...

WEST BANK SETTLER VIOLENCE SURGES

by JUNE BUDD

MASKED ISRAELI settlers have attacked Palestinians and torched olive trees in the West Bank

PALESTINIANS IN the West Bank say they've "reached a point where they are afraid to even leave their homes".

Amal lives in the city of Nablus, where conditions are deteriorating rapidly as Israeli settlers ramp up attacks.

"Military checkpoints are everywhere," she told Socialist Worker.

"Everywhere, you encounter active checkpoints where luggage, vehicles and individuals are searched."

The United Nations (UN) warned at the beginning of the month that military checkpoints have started to "choke Palestinian life".

Amal described how they "eliminate any possibility of safe, unhindered travel". She said, "People and vehicles are held for as long as ten hours waiting for the checkpoint to open so they can pass.

"Military checkpoints obstruct patients' access to hospitals, forcing pregnant women to give birth at these very locations.

"Patients are frequently detained at these checkpoints, where newborns and mothers have even died.

"Ambulances are held up, and women, children and the elderly are subjected to various forms of abuse."

The Oslo Accords, which came out of the sham "peace process" in the 1990s, divided the West Bank into three areas.

Area A is controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) which helps Israel police its occupation. It makes up less than 20 percent of the West Bank—and is broken up into 160 isolated enclaves. In Area B, which is just over 20 percent, Israel controls security while the PA runs the civil administration.

The lion's share of the West Bank—the 60 percent of Area C—is under full Israeli control.

Nablus is in Area A. But it's surrounded by territory in the other two areas, meaning Palestinians face checkpoints at every turn. And the supposed legal situation doesn't stop Israelis setting up "flying" checkpoints in the city itself.

Amal told Socialist Worker, "Checkpoints obstruct the movement of people and supplies. They make it hard for village residents to reach the city's markets to meet their basic needs.

"There is no safety. People are attacked in their own homes—which are often set on fire. Those on the streets face violence and arrest."

The West held out the promise of a "two-state solution" with a Palestinian state based on the West Bank and Gaza.

But the number of Israeli settlers has ballooned.

In Britain, the Labour government has imposed a ban on trade with "illegal" Israeli settlements in the West Bank. It has acknowledged that there is ethnic cleansing in areas of the West Bank perpetrated by "settler terrorists".

That shift wouldn't have happened without the immense pressure of millions of people.

But the Palestine movement is right to push for much more—a full trade and arms embargo on the Israeli state.

The ethnic cleansing in the West Bank isn't just down to far right settlers or far right ministers who support their land grabs.

No major party in the Israeli general election, set to take place on 27 October, opposes the settlers in the West Bank. Nor does any major party support even the sham of a "two-state solution".

That's no accident. It flows from the nature of the Israeli settler colonial state founded through the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people and theft of their land.

Thousands of civil servants left waiting in pension limbo

STEVE IS a disabled job centre worker, who has worked for 40 years and paid into a pension.

But he is facing serious financial hardship as private firm Capita has failed to pay tens of thousands of people on the Civil Service Pension Scheme the pensions they are owed.

Years of outsourcing mean that workers are falling into poverty.

There is currently a backlog of 93,000 pension cases and thousands of people are missing payments entirely or waiting on delayed payments.

"As a disabled person, I have higher costs," Steve told Socialist Worker.

"There are things that I struggle to do around the home and I need help. I potentially need to pay for someone to come in and help around the house.

"I can't do it, but I might not be able to pay someone to do it either.

"I wake up at five in the morning and I'm just about ready to leave for work at about 8.30am.

"People don't realise what you have to do. It's all the stuff like washing and dressing, taking medication. Even ironing a shirt—it isn't necessarily easy to do in my situation."

"I started working for the civil service in 1984," Steve told Socialist Worker. "I expected to be able to retire at 60.

"At that stage my understanding was that the pay wasn't necessarily that good, but you'd get a good pension at the end of it.

"Now, I've ended up in a situation where I'm 61 and I haven't managed to retire yet.

"And I don't even know whether I can partially retire, because I don't know whether I can afford it."

After pensions were privatised, workers like Steve ended up paying into multiple pensions, none of which they can access now.

"The pension scheme has been under attack," he explained.

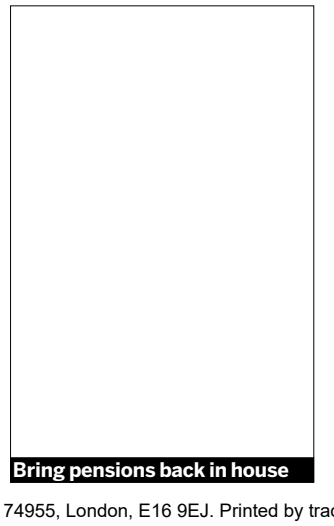
The pensions are now controlled by private company Capita, which took over last winter.

"It was already in a crisis under the previous administration, before it switched," Steve said.

"But it's just got that much worse under Capita. That's the problem when you get companies that are just doing this for profit.

"They need to get it right with people who have that experience and training.

"The system's been in such a mess. The online



Bring pensions back in house

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