

SOCIALIST★APPEAL

“Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point however is to change it.” - Karl Marx



TORIES IN TURMOIL
TIME TO
SWEEP
THEM
OUT!

SOCIALIST★APPEAL

WHO ARE WE? and WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

Socialist Appeal is the paper of the International Marxist Tendency in Britain. We are seeking to organise class-conscious workers and youth around a Marxist programme to change society.

The Tories are the political representatives of big business. As defenders of capitalism they are the sworn enemies of the working class.

Neither do we have trust in the Starmer's right-wing leadership of the Labour Party, who are taking the party back to Blairism.

The capitalist system, which is in a complete impasse, cannot be reformed but must be overthrown.

We are fighting for bold socialist policies to defend workers and challenge the capitalist system.

- Answer the cost of living crisis with a £15 per hour minimum wage. For a sliding (rising) scale of wages, with wage increases automatically tied to the rise in prices. The rise of pensions and benefits should also be linked to inflation.
- If the bosses say they can't afford it, we say: open up the books! Let the working class and the labour movement see the accounts! If firms plead bankruptcy, they should not be bailed out, but nationalised under workers' control.
- For a fully publicly-owned and free health service, under workers' control and management. Reverse all privatisation and outsourcing. All private health and care services must be nationalised without compensation, and integrated into the NHS.
- Fight the climate catastrophe and inflation with expropriation and socialist planning. Nationalise the energy monopolies, big supermarket chains, and distributors, without compensation.
- Ban evictions and cancel housing debts. Give local authorities the power to cap rents at affordable levels. And bring empty properties and the assets of the big landlords and management companies under public control.
- For a crash programme to build a million council houses a year. Nationalise the land, construction companies, and banks to provide the resources to accomplish this.
- To fight job cuts and unemployment, work should be shared out without any loss of pay, in order to lower the hours of the working week.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws. No to class compromise. All union officials to be regularly elected with the right of immediate recall by the membership. Officials to receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- Fight for the real emancipation of women. Remove all barriers to women working: provide free nurseries, after-school childcare, and care for the elderly. End all forms of discrimination. Equal pay for work of equal value.
- Abolish the relics of privilege and feudalism: the monarchy and the House of Lords. The assets of the parasitic landlord class and aristocracy should be expropriated for the public good.
- Scrap tuition fees and student rents. Free education and full maintenance grants for all. End marketisation – kick the profiteers out of education. Put staff in control in schools and universities.
- Many small businesses are faced with bankruptcy – squeezed not only by the banks, but by the big monopolies. By nationalising the banks we can supply these small businesses with the lifeline of guaranteed low-interest credit.
- The financial resources required to fight the crisis must not come from increased taxes or more austerity, but through the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses. Rather than a 'wealth tax', we call for the expropriation of the monopolies.
- Instead of building up the national debt through government borrowing, the money needed should be obtained entirely from expropriating the accumulated profits of big business and the billionaires.

- No to austerity! Reverse the cuts! The working class must not pay for this crisis!
- For a mass campaign to bring down this criminal Tory government and do away with this rotten system.

It is clear that the market has failed and capitalism is in a deep crisis. It is the anarchy of capitalism that prevents the rational planning of society's resources, in Britain and internationally.

- We therefore stand for the nationalisation of the 100 biggest monopolies, banks, and insurance companies – under workers' control and management – without compensation. They have stolen enough from us already. On this basis, the economy can be democratically planned in the interests of the majority, and not for the super profits of a few billionaires.
- As internationalists we fight for a Socialist Federation of Britain linked to a Socialist United States of Europe and a World Socialist Federation, in order to plan resources internationally for the benefit of all. This would allow humanity to begin solving the urgent issues of climate change, disease, and poverty that face society and our planet.

There is, however, a crisis of leadership in the labour movement. Those who have attempted to patch-up capitalism have been found wanting. It is therefore time to energetically build the forces of Marxism, embodied today in the International Marxist Tendency, which alone offers a revolutionary way out of this crisis. ■

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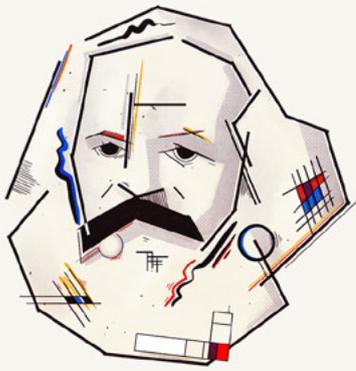


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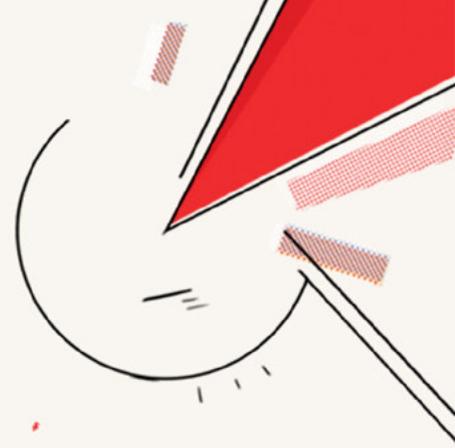
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Join us today!



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST UNIVERSITY



This year's International Marxist University will take place between 23-26 July.

Organised by the International Marxist Tendency (IMT), the IMU is an excellent school for revolutionaries around the globe in the ideas needed to overthrow capitalism and fight for a socialist future.

The theme of this year's IMU is the three component parts of Marxism, with three strands of parallel talks on these core pillars of Marxist theory: dialectical materialism; historical materialism; and Marxist economics.

Comrades of Socialist Appeal and the IMT are organising watch-parties all over the British Isles – from London to Edinburgh; from Birmingham to Dublin – with hundreds set to attend and participate.

If you want to join a watch-party for #IMU22, check out the map to find the nearest one to you, and get in touch with harry@socialist.net for the details. ■



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TO REGISTER**

FEATURING TALKS ON

- Marxism and art
- The Spanish conquest of the Americas
- The Marxist theory of knowledge
- The origins of Marxist economics
- Marxism, money, and inflation
- US Civil War: the 2nd American Revolution
- Marxism and modern science
- Marxism and the state

AND MANY MORE!

OFFICE APPEAL

DONATE TODAY TOWARDS A HISTORIC MILESTONE!

Socialist Appeal

Socialist Appeal and the International Marxist Tendency have launched a historic campaign to raise the necessary funds to purchase our very own office space. The target of this campaign is to raise £200,000 by the end of October, which can be put towards this important investment.

The campaign has had an excellent start, with a number of sizable, generous donations from our comrades and supporters.

So far we have received pledges totalling an impressive £56,684. But there is still a long way to go to reach our target.

Such incredible sacrifice fills us with confidence that our target can be reached: not only with equally impressive pledges such as these, but also through a plethora of donations – large and small – from all our readers.

The timing of this campaign is very significant. The Marxist tendency has emerged from the pandemic stronger than ever before. And just in time, with a new set of crises engulfing the country and the entire world.

Already, through hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm, we have achieved major milestones as an organisation.

We have established ourselves as the dominant left group on university campuses up and down Britain. We have a truly national presence – with comrades out on the streets every weekend, selling the paper and discussing Marxist ideas with workers and youth – from Tyneside to Falmouth. And we have reached the milestone of 1000 subscribers.

All of this has helped establish Socialist Appeal as a recognised tendency in the labour movement.

But we must not rest on our laurels. Our most important years are still ahead of us. And we must recognise that we are in a new period now.

To continue growing and building, we must proceed on stable foundations. For this reason, we are marking our 30th anniversary as an organisation with a

campaign to purchase our own office space, with extra room to enable us to continue expanding, including taking on new full-time staff.

Having our own office space will bring priceless benefits to the building of the tendency.

All of the generous donations that our friends and supporters make require sacrifice and commitment. As things currently stand, much of this sacrifice ends up in the pocket of a landlord.

This is a necessary evil for now. But if this campaign is successful, then all future donations will contribute to strengthening the financial resources of the Marxist tendency, and giving an extra boost to the vital task of building the forces of Marxism.

Before long, revolutionary events will shake the world. In fact, this has already begun, as inflation spirals and the crisis of capitalism deepens.

We are confident that with strong, solid foundations, our organisation can not only withstand these tremors, but can continue building the revolutionary leadership needed to channel the anger amongst the exploited and oppressed towards the socialist transformation of society.

Please help us in this important task by digging deep and donating what you can.

Forward to a permanent office! Forward to the socialist revolution, when we can abolish capitalism and its parasitic, profiteering landlords for good! ■

£200,000 TARGET

£56,683.50 RAISED

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE NOW!](#)



WHAT WE SAY

DISCONTENT MOUNTS: TIME TO STEP UP THE FIGHT!

Editorial

“Now is the summer of Britain’s trade union discontent”, states the *Financial Times*, the mouthpiece of big business.

For more than three decades, there has been a ‘lull’ on the industrial front. Strikes were at an all-time low. Workers got by on credit, helped by the fact that prices remained relatively stable. Now that is no longer sustainable.

Pressures are rising in the trade unions, with increasing calls for militant action. After years of wage cuts, and with inflation heading over 10%, workers have no alternative but to fight.

Anti-union laws

In response, the Tories have threatened to tighten up the anti-trade union laws, and to employ agency workers to break strikes.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch has asserted that the movement will respond to such attacks. Sharon Graham, general secretary of Unite, also warned: “If you force our legitimate activities outside the law, then don’t expect us to play by the rules.”

The trade union leaders should not simply present a verbal opposition. There should be a united front to fight the anti-trade union laws, which are hamstringing the movement.

If this means breaking the law, these class laws, so be it. The democratic rights we enjoy today were won by class fighters – like the Chartists – breaking such laws in the past. It is about time we got off our knees and returned to such militant traditions.

Government of crisis

There has never been a better time. The ruling class is facing a serious crisis, and the Tories are badly split. Boris Johnson is running out of road and is deeply wounded.

The Tories are facing defeat in two upcoming by-elections. This will greatly compound Johnson’s difficulties. Their saviour in 2019 is now a lead weight around their necks. Tory

MPs are terrified of losing their seats. They feel the ground shifting beneath their feet.

“There are difficult by-elections to come, allegations pending, and a Commons’ committee investigation pending in the autumn,” stated Paul Goodman, editor of the *ConservativeHome* website.

Johnson and the Tories will be thrown from pillar to post by these events. Despite its majority of dozens, this is – and will be – a government of crisis.

Degenerates and liars

Without doubt, Boris has presided over the most inept government in British history. He is the head of the most short-sighted, stupid, cavalier gang of charlatans and crooks ever produced by the Tory Party.

Johnson is the clown that leads this court of degenerates and liars, only interested in one thing: himself. He has no principles, and is prepared to do almost anything to save his skin.

The Tory leader is even prepared to rip up the Northern Ireland Protocol, risk a trade war with the European Union, and damage the interests of British big business in

order to appease the rabid ranks of the Tory Party.

Boris is determined to stagger on. The only way he would leave office is if he is forced to do so, kicking and screaming. They would have to drag him out of Downing Street by the ankles.

The problem faced by the ruling class is: who could replace Boris? The choice is very limited, with some even worse, more worrying options. The ruling class could end up with the likes of Liz Truss, a Thatcherite imbecile.

The crisis in the Tory Party is, at root, a symptom of the sickness and decline of British capitalism. The Tory rebellion is only another reflection of the turbulent crisis-ridden period we have entered. And it is going to get far stormier, with ‘stagflation’ looming and the class struggle sharpening.

‘Sir’ Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, is crowing over Boris’ plight. But his main criticism of Johnson is that his actions are bringing the whole of the British establishment into disrepute.

Starmer, in turn, is putting himself forward as the real champion of the capitalist establishment – a man who the ruling class can trust. However, he is such a grey individual that, despite everything, voters say they would prefer Johnson as prime minister!

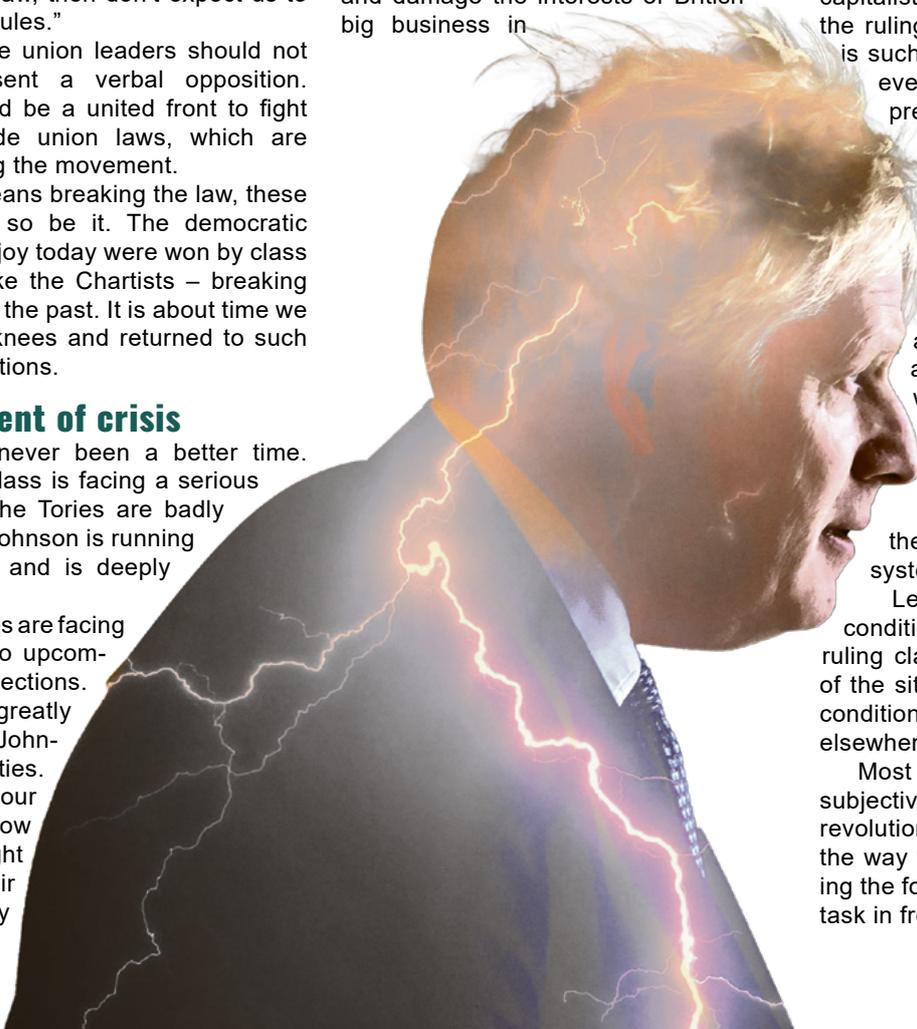
Revolutionary leadership

Whatever the outcome of these struggles at the top, the deepening crisis of British – and world – capitalism is preparing massive class battles ahead, as the accumulation of anger and discontent within the working class reaches explosive levels.

Rather than looking to reform or patch up capitalism, demands will grow louder for the overthrow of this whole rotten system.

Lenin once said that the first condition of revolution is a split in the ruling class. That is an apt description of the situation in Britain. But the other conditions are also maturing here, as elsewhere.

Most important amongst these is the subjective factor: the presence of a bold revolutionary leadership that can show the way forward. Providing this – building the forces of Marxism – is the urgent task in front of us. ■



INFLATION AND INSTABILITY

BRITISH CAPITALISM'S

PERFECT STORM

Adam Booth

British capitalism is facing a perfect storm. This is not just the assessment of the Marxists, but also of the OECD, a club of advanced capitalist countries.

Surging inflation; rising interest rates; falling real incomes; supply-chain disruption; labour shortages; not to mention the shock of war and disease: all of these – and more – are hammering the UK economy, blow after blow.

As a result, the OECD forecasts that Britain will see the second slowest economic growth of any of the G20 nations. Only Russia, hurt by western imperialism's sanctions, is predicted to be worse hit.

Whilst inflation is estimated to remain at an average of 7.4% next year, the economy is expected to grind to a halt: a deadly combo referred to by mainstream economists as 'stagflation'.

Doom and gloom

But this is not a mere prophecy of doom. Recent figures show that the British economy shrank by 0.3% in April. And workers are already facing a catastrophe, with the costs of energy, rent, food, and fuel all soaring, whilst pay fails to keep up.

Petrol prices, for example, have climbed to a 17-year high. For the first time ever, filling up a typical family car will now set drivers back at least £100.

As a result, petrol station managers are reporting a 39% increase in forecourt fuel theft since January. Meanwhile, according to one senior analyst at data firm OilX, "the [oil] refiners are printing money at the moment...more than they have ever witnessed."

Who's to blame?

The ruling class clearly has no solutions to this disaster. Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey, for example, asserted that he and other policymakers were "helpless" in the face of a global maelstrom.

Instead, both Bailey and Boris Johnson have scandalously blamed workers for fuelling inflation by instigating a 'wage-price spiral'.

Scapegoating striking RMT members for inflation will fool nobody, however. Everyone can see that it is workers who are struggling to maintain their purchasing power as prices skyrocket. If anything is spiralling, it is the profits and pay of the bankers and bosses.

If the Tories are looking for someone to blame, they should look no further than their own degenerate leader. The corrupt, self-seeking Prime Minister has done more than anyone to damage the prospects of British capitalism.

After all, Boris' Brexit belligerence and opportunistic warmongering have certainly helped to fan the flames of inflation:

raising the cost of imports; cutting off the supply of key commodities; and wasting public money on military spending.

Class war

Rebellious Tory MPs, ravenous for more 'red meat', are putting pressure on Johnson to address the cost-of-living crisis with a new wave of tax cuts. But it is corporate bosses and billionaires, not ordinary people, who are most likely to benefit from these.

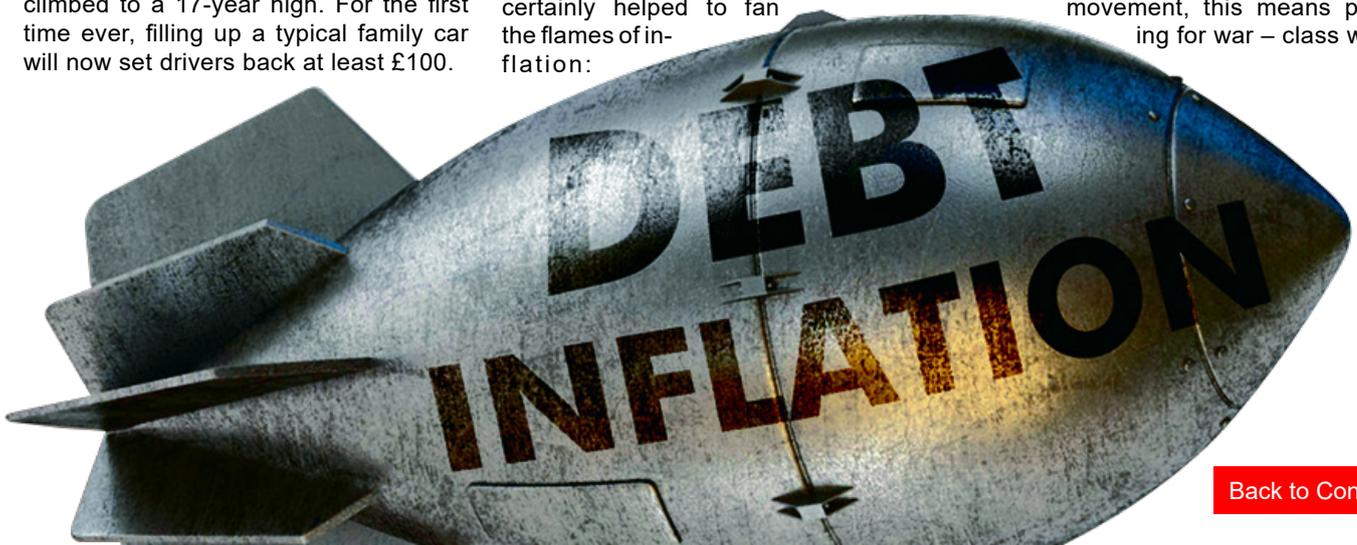
Starmer's Labour, meanwhile, have offered no real alternative – even flip-flopping on their own meek demand for a windfall tax on the super-profits of the energy monopolies.

If anything, the party's leadership is looking to outflank the Tories when it comes to supporting big business.

In the absence of any political solution, as the crisis deepens and inflation bites, workers are increasingly taking matters into their own hands, organising and striking back.

From the railways to Royal Mail; from cleaners to civil servants; and from university lecturers to school teachers: workers across the board are mobilising to take militant action. And this is only the beginning.

For Boris Johnson and the ruling class, this means further headaches to contend with. For the left and labour movement, this means preparing for war – class war. ■



LAW AND DISORDER

CRISIS CAUSES CRIMINAL JUSTICE TO CRUMBLE

Ben Gliniecki

The volley of economic blows being rained down on workers is preparing a social explosion, potentially very soon. The ruling class can see this coming and is trying to prepare. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act is part of that preparation. This new law has tightened restrictions on the right to protest, and hugely widened police powers.

The passing of this law has been accompanied by a permanent loosening of the restrictions on the use of stop-and-search powers by police, to make it easier to conduct searches even if there is no suspicion of wrong-doing.

Meanwhile "Police forces have begun planning for disorder over the summer amid fears that the cost-of-living crisis and other pressures could trigger civil unrest" reported *The Times* last month.

Most recently, the Tories have openly considered legally restricting the right to strike of RMT members, in the face of planned national rail action later this month.

Unfortunately for the ruling class, stricter laws and police planning can't hold back the explosion that's brewing. The Tories are behaving like King Canute trying to hold back the tide.

Rising crime

Cracks in bourgeois law and order are already appearing due to the intolerable economic situation many people find themselves in.

To take just one example, it was recently reported that petrol stations have seen a 40% increase in people driving off without paying for fuel since January. The first week of June saw a 22% jump compared to May.

A spokesman for the AA said: "The thief is someone who relies on their

car, motorbike or scooter to get to or go about their work but their finances have been broken by the cost of living crisis. Stealing fuel then becomes an act of desperation."

Even the police understand the limitations of the law in the face of the crisis. The chief inspector of the constabulary said in May that police officers should not necessarily prosecute people who are stealing food in order to survive.

Even if they wanted to enforce the law, the power of the police has never been weaker. There are around 10,000 fewer police officers today than there were in 2010, before the Tory government's austerity programme. In that same period the population of England & Wales has increased by 4 million, leaving fewer police for more people.

Public confidence in the police is at a record low, following a cascade of scandals. Fewer than half of Londoners think the police do a good job. The situation is worse in Manchester, where the police receive twice as many corruption and sexual misconduct complaints as the notorious Metropolitan police in London.

In a country that relies on 'policing by consent', this leaves the police in a very weak position.

Crumbling state pillars

In August 2011 the shooting of a black man by police sparked massive rioting, fuelled by government cuts and economic hardship. In 1981 riots in Brixton, Toxteth, and other places were the product of racist policing and economic hardship caused by Thatcherite policies. Today, those conditions have intensified tenfold.

In both 1981 and 2011 the ruling class relied on the state machine of police, courts, and prisons to clamp down hard on social unrest. Faced with similar conditions today, that state machine is looking more unreliable than ever as a weapon of ruling class repression.

At last month's conference of the Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file police officers, the Chair of the Federation complained that police pay has been cut by 20% and a growing number of police officers are forced to rely on food banks to survive.

The Federation passed a motion of no confidence in the Home Secretary, and relations between the police and the government are at an all time low.

The recent conference of the Prison Officers Association overwhelmingly passed a motion demanding an end to the ban on prison and probation staff taking strike action.

The delegate moving the motion said "Our workload has increased...We've been on a pay freeze since 2015. Our members, with the cost of living, are going to go into financial hardship... Staffing levels are getting dangerous."

Lawyers are also taking industrial action. Since April barristers have been taking limited strike action. Now they are balloting to escalate that action, which could bring the court system grinding to a halt.

This is being matched with action by solicitors refusing to do low paid work, while court staff organised by the PCS union have an outstanding ballot for strike action over new IT systems.

What does this mean?

Lenin explained that one of the conditions indicating a revolutionary situation is that the ruling class is unable to rule in the way it once did.

Rising class struggle and a crumbling state machine suggest this situation is approaching sooner rather than later. ■



RACIST IMMIGRATION ATTACKS WORKERS AND YOUTH FIGHT BACK

Caleb Sharp

Goldsmiths Marxists

On Saturday 11 June, in a heroic act of solidarity, defiance, and militancy, the local working-class community of Peckham, London, gathered to prevent the unjust deportation of a Nigerian resident.

Immigration officers were in the process of pulling the man from his home, but were halted by a rapidly-assembled protest of around two hundred people.

Led by anti-deportation activists, the crowds blocked the Home Office van in which the man was detained for hours. Surrounding the police and linking arms, workers and youth demanded his immediate release.

Officers tried to intimidate and repress demonstrators, attempting arrests on several occasions. But the police were quickly thwarted through organised struggle.

In the end, after hours of standoff, officers released the targeted man on bail, and were seen returning him to his home. As the cops left with their tail between their legs, protestors shouted at the police: "Don't come back to Peckham!"

The people of Peckham were clear in their message: We will not tolerate – nor allow – the Tories' racist immigration policies!

Division

Similarly to other recent successful anti-deportation protests in Hackney and Glasgow, this event should be seen as an important and inspiring victory; a display of what workers and youth can achieve when united and organised.

But with the Tories ramping up their repression against migrants and refugees, looking for a distraction from their own crimes, we can expect many

more racist raid attempts in the coming period, as part of the government's 'hostile environment' agenda.

The government has demonstrated that it is determined to plough on with scandalous plans to deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda, for example. This is despite opposition from human-rights campaigners, lawyers, and even from within the establishment itself – including Prince Charles.

As I left the recent Peckham protest, I was stopped by a local mother who asked if the man had been released. Upon hearing my confirmation, she bleakly concluded: "They're just going to come get him another day...This won't really change anything." It is unfortunate how correct she is.

The success of this action shows the potential power that workers have to resist state repression. But if we're to put a

stop to racist deportations once and for all, the movement needs to be organised and directed against the system as a whole.

The ruling class – including the bosses and the Tories – rely on racist policies and other forms of oppression to divide and weaken the working class.

And as capitalism descends ever-deeper into crisis, the capitalists and their representatives will increasingly lean on racism, xenophobia, and bigotry in order to deflect anger and divert attention away from the real enemy: them and their barbaric system.

Solidarity

On the other side, as workers – both migrant and British-born – are further exploited and attacked, we will see even more of these militant struggles: against the bosses; against the Tories; and against the capitalist state that protects their profits and privileges.

Whether they intend it or not, Boris and his criminal government are pushing workers and youth into taking action. And the lessons of Peckham are clear: to win, our movement needs bold and militant tactics.

Most importantly, we need to be armed with a clear socialist programme. The solidarity seen in Peckham, Hackney, Glasgow, and elsewhere is truly inspiring. But isolated victories are not enough. We must tackle the problem at its rotten roots.

If we truly want to defend migrants, refugees, and all workers against oppression and exploitation, we must unite on a class basis, and fight to overthrow the Tories and the system they represent – the system that breeds violence, injustice, and discrimination: capitalism. ■



ARMS PROFITEERING PEAKS AS CAPITALISTS SPY AN OPPORTUNITY IN UKRAINE

Khaled Malachi

The war in Ukraine has ushered in a wave of militarism. The western imperialists have poured billions into sending military equipment to Ukraine. And 'defence' spending has rocketed across the NATO nations.

As a result, in the midst of the devastation, arms manufacturers have hit the jackpot.

At the outbreak of the conflict, shares in Britain's BAE Systems rose by 4.8%, to a one-year high. The share prices of US defence giants Lockheed Martin and Raytheon have also sharply increased.

Even before the war, these manufacturers of death and destruction were raking it in. Whilst the global economy contracted during the pandemic, the arms industry's profits reached astronomical heights, peaking at \$531bn in 2020.

With European countries pledging an additional £170bn in military spending for the years to come, even these eye-watering past profits will pale in comparison to the current boon in business.

In other words, whilst western imperialism fights out its proxy war with Russia to the last drop of Ukrainian blood, profiteering arms producers will make a killing.

Love the bomb

Ordinary people across the world look on the crisis in Ukraine with consternation. Meanwhile, arms manufacturers spy an opportunity.

Even before the outbreak of war, Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet was suggesting that the "renewed great power competition" (read: tensions between the imperialist nations) would bode well for business.

Since the Ukraine conflict began, the jubilation of these crooks has been thinly concealed. And in true Orwellian fashion, western politicians

have assured us that fuelling the war machine will bring peace.

From Biden's PR trip to a Lockheed Martin factory to tell those in the facility that they are aiding the fight for freedom; to belligerent Boris' photo-op at the Thales weapons factory in Belfast: we are being told by our ruling class to stop worrying about the war, and to learn to love the bomb.

The British Prime Minister also visited India recently, in an effort to boost defence ties with the Modi regime, touting the military equipment of UK arms producers such as BAE Systems and Rolls Royce.

By hook or by crook, Boris understands that if there is business to be made, better to make it British business. The cynicism of the imperialists knows no bounds.

Tory ambitions

At first, the distraction of war appeared to work wonders for the beleaguered PM. But now it is primarily his internal opponents who are benefitting from this jingoism, with prospective leadership challengers utilising the conflict to push their own career ambitions.

Ben Wallace, the Tory defence secretary, has been applying pressure for military expenditure to be raised to address an increasingly "dangerous" world situation. Similarly, foreign secretary Liz Truss, another budding leadership hopeful, has argued that NATO's 2% defence spending target must be the "floor, not the ceiling".

Elsewhere, Tom Tugendhat and Tobias Ellwood – aspiring Tory MPs from military backgrounds – have both opined that more *must* be pumped into this proxy war.

Needless to say, these warmongers are not motivated by humanitarian

considerations. Rather they are driven by their own careerist interests; by deluded fantasies of reestablishing British imperialism as a major player on the international stage; and by a desire to play the part of loyal poodle to Washington.

Colossal waste

The war has driven up inflation, putting millions of families on the breadline. Yet the Tories are actively helping to prolong the war, for their own interests.

Britain has (so far) committed £1.3bn in military support to Ukraine. Many look upon this spectacle not with flag-waving fervour, but with frustration at what a colossal waste of money and resources it represents. From the perspective of British imperialism, however, this is money well-spent.

What would be a waste for these hawks, in fact, would be if the British ruling class missed this opportunity to flex its weakening muscles on the world stage; to prove its junior partnership credentials to US imperialism; and for home-grown arms companies to make a tidy profit.

Capitalism and war

We should expect nothing less from these scoundrels. No amount of moral pressure on the Tories will make them curb the profiteering, or stop them fanning the flames of war.

After all, their entire *raison d'être* is to protect the profits and interests of British big business; to defend and represent the very system that is responsible for war and all its horrors.

The conflict in Ukraine, at root, is a proxy war between different imperialist powers; a consequence of capitalist nations vying for power, prestige, and profit.

As Lenin explained: Yes, war is terrible – terribly profitable. To end the destruction of war, and the shameless profiteering that accompanies it, we must organise and fight to overthrow the system that spawns this: capitalism. ■



SUNAK'S WINDFALL TAX FIGHT INFLATION WITH EXPROPRIATION!

Len Scott

Under pressure to address the cost-of-living crisis, Tory Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced a 'windfall tax' of 25% on the profits of the oil and gas monopolies, which have soared as a result of rising energy prices.

This tax will help to fund a one-off £400 reduction in energy bills for all households, with the most vulnerable receiving up to £1,200.

At best, this is a sticking plaster. Instead, the labour movement must fight for nationalisation and workers' control of the energy industry. We must tackle inflation with expropriation.

Profits

According to Citizens Advice, around five million adults will be unable to afford to pay their energy bills in the months ahead – forced either to go into debt or arrears, or to cut back on essential usage for heating and cooking.

And this, the charity estimates, may rise to 14 million – or 1-in-4 of the UK adult population – by the winter, following a further rise in the energy price cap in October, which is predicted to push inflation over 10%.

It's not bad news for everyone though. There have been some big winners from this crisis – namely, the energy giants.

In the first quarter of this year, for example, Shell and BP reported bumper profits of around £7.3 billion and £5 billion respectively.

With millions in fuel poverty on one side, and eye-watering profits for the bosses on the other, Sunak has stepped in to offer some crumbs, whilst leaving the capitalists to continue with their profiteering in the long-run.

With anger mounting against the Tories' consistent breaching of lockdown rules, meanwhile, it is clear that the Chancellor's windfall tax is not only a tokenistic gesture, but is also a cynical attempt to divert discontent away from his criminal government.

Flaws

Sunak's latest package of support also has several obvious flaws. For starters, most households will only be entitled to a single £400 reduction in their energy bills. But the estimated increase in October alone will amount to £800 per year. And this comes on top of a £700 per year increase in April.

Even in a best-case scenario, it is widely believed that bills will not return to 'normal' levels until at least the end of next year.

At the same time, Sunak's new 'levy' is estimated to raise just £5 billion, whereas the promised support package will cost around £15 billion. The £10 billion shortfall will be covered by public borrowing, which means further austerity elsewhere in the government's budget.

Nor does this tax do anything to address long-term problems facing the energy industry: the lack of investment in infrastructure and storage, which

has left the country vulnerable to swings in supply and demand; the need to insulate millions of homes, in order to reduce heating costs; or the existential question of the climate crisis, and the urgent necessity for a green transition to renewable technologies.

All of these problems have arisen due to the utter failure of the capitalist market, which causes nothing but chaos and misery for the working class. And a one-off tax – a mere slap on the wrist for fat-cat energy bosses – offers no real solution.

Expropriation

The resources, wealth, and technologies needed to tackle the energy and climate crises already exist. But they currently sit in the hands of the capitalists.

The only genuine solution, therefore, is for the expropriation of the energy monopolies under workers' control, as part of a socialist economic plan.

Only then can we end this disgusting injustice, where millions are at risk of freezing to death, while the bosses laugh all the way to the bank. ■



AIR TRAVEL CHAOS SYMPTOM OF A SICK INDUSTRY

Martin Swayne, pilot

BALPA member

(personal capacity)

Recent weeks and months have been a miserable experience for people trying to catch a break abroad.

EasyJet recently cancelled 10 percent of their London Gatwick schedule. Low cost competitor Wizz Air effectively did the same thing at the last minute. Passengers at Manchester airport who had booked through travel agent Tui, meanwhile, found out from police that their long-awaited holidays had been called off.

This isn't a one-off over the bank holiday, however, but is now a clear pattern – one that will only get worse in the busy summer months.

The chief executive of London's Heathrow airport, for example, has warned that it could take up to 18 months for the aviation industry to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Fragile system

Distressed holidaymakers are therefore rightly asking: what is going on?

The Tory government has been quick to point the finger at the airline industry, with transport secretary Grant Shapps – under pressure to address the recent mayhem at UK airports – demanding to meet with aviation bosses.

But the Tories have conveniently forgotten their own role in this debacle. For years, the government has not only failed to support the industry, but have actively helped to wreck it.

Getting an aircraft from A to B depends on many moving parts (literally and metaphorically). And it doesn't take much to upset a very delicate, fragile balance of logistics, especially since there is little-to-no slack in the system.

Years and years of ruthless competition and profit-seeking by the bosses has led to services and working conditions being cut to the bone – and now into the bone itself. And now a perfect storm of factors are combining to exacerbate an already-broken status quo.

Cheap labour

Some people blame the current mess on Brexit. Amongst these is Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary: a prominent advocate

of providing easier access to Eastern European workers, so that they can be exploited on poverty wages by himself and other airline bosses.

Britain's departure from the EU no doubt has had an effect on flight operations in the UK. But clearly it is not the main cause of tourists' problems.

After all, equally long queues have been witnessed in Dublin airport, and even longer ones in Schiphol Amsterdam. US airline Delta, meanwhile, has already preemptively grounded flights scheduled for July and August.

In reality, the whole infrastructure of the aviation industry is underpinned by cheap labour: from cleaners and baggage handlers, to check-in desk workers, dispatchers, aircraft fuelers, and cabin crew; and increasingly also pilots and air traffic controllers.

Many are disgusted with the industry, and have resigned on the spot.

Combined with mass sackings at many airports and airlines at the start of the pandemic,

alongside a post-lockdown surge in demand for air travel, this has now led to acute labour shortages.

For us as pilots, it can be challenging to explain to passengers why a particular flight is delayed. Mentioning the real reasons – such as a lack of crew – is highly taboo.

Of course, airline bosses have been more than happy to take customers' money for flights that could not sustainably be provided and put on. Often this money was handed over months in advance.

They knew there was no way they could get the staff in place to actually service and crew the flights for which they had sold tickets.

Workers' control

To defend our jobs, pay, and conditions, we – as airline workers – need to fight for collective bargaining, through the threat and implementation of strike action. And this, in turn, requires the building of combative unions in our workplaces, and across the industry.

Those of us doing the actual work at airports and in the air have no common interest with the bosses and shareholders. Their only goal is generating profit on the backs of us, the workers.

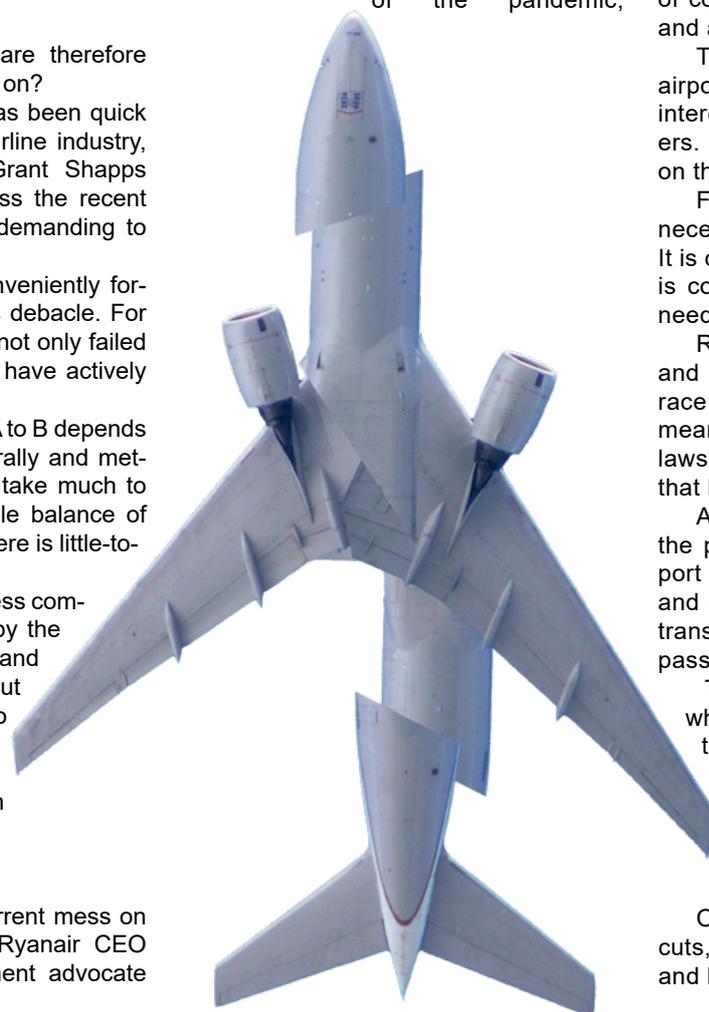
From a passenger point of view, it is necessary to look at the bigger picture. It is clear that the current aviation model is completely broken. The whole setup needs to be drastically overhauled.

Reversing decades of privatisation and cost-cutting would be a start. The race to the bottom has to stop. But that means overthrowing the profit-driven laws and logic of the capitalist system that lie behind this.

Aviation is only one small part of the puzzle. Ultimately, the entire transport sector – including air, rail, water, and road travel – needs to be radically transformed, so that it benefits workers, passengers, and the planet.

To achieve this, we must take the whole transport system – along with the other key levers of the economy – out of the hands of the bosses, and instead place these under public ownership and workers' control, as part of a bold socialist plan.

Only then can we end the chaos, cuts, and crisis facing airline workers and holidaymakers alike. ■



RAINBOW LOGOS AND PINKWASHING

KICK CAPITALISM OUT OF PRIDE!

Harrison Salkeld

Newcastle Marxists

Once again in Pride month, the capitalists and their representatives are eagerly attempting to show their 'undying and unwavering support' to the LGBT community.

Corporations are falling over themselves to make tokenistic gestures. For example, budget hotel chain Premier Inn have changed their branding to call themselves 'Premier Out'. And the US Marines have even tweeted a photo of rainbow tipped bullets, with the caption that they are 'proud to serve'!

What all these companies and institutions really mean is that they're proud to profit from the struggle of LGBT people, whilst doing nothing to actually address the issues faced by them.

Rainbow corporations

In reality, the so-called 'pride' exhibited by these companies is little more than a cynical facade. There are a whole host of companies who, whilst waving rainbow flags in the West, have no problem selling their products in countries that repress LGBT people.

Banks such as HSBC and Barclays ensure that they have prominent floats at London's Pride celebrations. Yet they also both heavily invest in Saudi Arabia, where the regime brutally oppresses LGBT people.

This hypocrisy is not an oversight, but is the logical product of a system that is solely driven by profit.

'Pinkwashing'

In Britain, there has been a dramatic shift in public attitudes towards homosexuality over the past couple of decades. As such, corporations are now well aware that they must present themselves as LGBT 'friendly', lest they face a hit to their image and sales.

Adopting the rainbow flag and jumping on the Pride bandwagon has become a convenient – and cheap – way for companies to give themselves a 'progressive' veneer, whilst carrying on with exploitation as usual. In a word, they are attempting to 'pinkwash' a system built on exploitation and greed.

The irony is that it has been through past struggles – such as Pride, when it really was a political protest – that homophobic attitudes have been challenged. But where were these companies in the 1980s, when police and Tory repression against the LGBT community was rife?

Words not deeds

The fact is that this corporate pinkwashing does nothing to help LGBT people. Beneath all the rainbow-themed logos and products, LGBT oppression continues to exist. The discrimination faced by LGBT people is compounded by class questions – issues that the capitalists and their political representatives are themselves responsible for.

LGBT people are disproportionately more likely to end up homeless, for example, due to a housing crisis which condemns millions to misery.

Similarly, LGBT people are acutely affected by the underfunding of the NHS, and of mental health services. A study by Stonewall found that, over the previous year, half of LGBT people had experienced depression. No amount of rainbow logos will do anything to solve these problems, which are a product of capitalism.

Overthrow the system

The Stonewall riots, the birthplace of Pride, began as a protest against the police and the repression of the capitalist state.

Since then, Pride has been co-opted by the ruling class in order to provide a progressive figleaf for their otherwise entirely reactionary agenda; a cheap, smiling mask, behind which lies the ugly face of capitalism. We must therefore reclaim the legacy of Pride as a protest, not a pinkwashing opportunity for our exploiters.

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, those oppressed and exploited by this barbaric system will face further attacks from the Tories and the bosses.

To fight back, and end all injustice and inequality, workers and youth must unite on a class basis – and struggle to end all forms of oppression once and for all with the complete overthrow of the vile capitalist system. ■



THE "JUNE DAYS" OF 1848

Josh Holroyd

In February 1848, the workers of Paris overthrew their king and founded the Second French Republic. Months later they would rise again, in what became known as the 'June Days', which Karl Marx described at the time as "the greatest revolution that has ever taken place... a revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie".

The workers went down to defeat in June 1848, but their heroic struggle passed down a legacy and lessons which remained extremely valuable to workers of today.

The July Monarchy

France in the 1830s and 40s lived under the so-called 'July Monarchy' of King Louis-Philippe. The regime was a hotbed of corruption.

Through the ever-expanding national debt and the distribution of contracts for public works, the ministers "piled the main burdens on the state, and secured the golden fruits to the speculating finance aristocracy", in Marx's words. This state of affairs will feel very familiar to anyone living in Britain today.

The young working class was ruthlessly exploited under this 'bourgeois monarchy', often working 14 or even 18 hours a day to earn barely enough to survive. The lack of housing meant that workers and their families were crammed into tiny rooms and forced to live in the most squalid conditions imaginable.

But it was also in this period that the workers began to forge their own organisations and education societies, where the ideas of socialism were eagerly debated. The most well-known socialist of the 1840s was Louis Blanc, who published his best-known work, *The Organisation of Labour*, in 1839.

Taking up the 'right to work' – an idea first put forward by Fourier – as his slogan,

Blanc called for the creation of 'social workshops' by the state, which would offer employment to all.

The February Revolution

France was rocked by a deep economic crisis in 1846 and 1847. In this context of instability the liberal opposition resolved to strengthen its case for electoral reform by appealing directly to the people, or at least the respectable middle classes, who would stand to gain from their modest extension of the franchise.

However, the monarchy's draconian anti-assembly laws made it impossible for them to hold political meetings or rallies. Instead, they announced a campaign of 'banquets', in which attendees would pay an entrance fee to receive some food, wine for toasts, and then be harangued by a handful of well-known speakers.

The first banquet of the campaign took place in Paris in July 1847. Immediately, the campaign came under the influence of the more radical 'Democrats', who were supporters of universal suffrage.

As the campaign progressed the workers were also drawn into the political struggle. But in addition to the vote they also raised their own social demands, just like the British Chartists. At a banquet in Chartres for example, 'the organisation of labour' was raised as a demand alongside universal suffrage.

In parliament, the banquet campaign had done nothing to break the resistance of the government. In an atmosphere of escalating tension, the liberal deputy, Alexis de Tocqueville offered the following warning:

"This, gentlemen, is my profound conviction: I believe that we are at this moment sleeping on a volcano."

When the authorities banned the last of the banquets in Paris on 22 February 1848, the volcano erupted at last.

In the working-class districts of the city arms shops were looted and barricades

began to be built immediately. The next morning, the National Guard was called out to restore order. But instead they came chanting 'Long live reform!'

The king dismissed the government, hoping to quell the revolt, but this only urged the masses on. When a column of protestors carrying a red flag pressed up against a line of infantry, the troops fired directly into the crowd. Fifty-two were killed on the spot.

The workers were enraged by the massacre, pledging, 'Vengeance!' From this point the fate of the monarchy was sealed.

By the next day the city was under the control of the armed working class. As the abdication of the king in favour of his nine-year-old grandson was being announced, the parliament was invaded by the revolutionary workers, who forced the proclamation of the Republic.

The workers betrayed

At all stages of the revolution of February 1848, the initiative belonged to the working class.

It was the workers who built and died on the barricades, and it was the workers who forced the proclamation of the Republic. But the class that was brought to power as a result of this workers' revolution was not the working class. Nor did their representatives even obtain a majority.

The Provisional Government which was handed power on 24 February was overwhelmingly made up of 'pure', or 'moderate' republicans, with a couple of socialists like Louis Blanc tacked on under pressure from the workers.

The workers' insurrection had placed its enemies in power. Leon Trotsky called this the "paradox of the February Revolution" in 1917, which applies just as well to February 1848.

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Meanwhile, on the streets of Paris the armed workers remained the almost undisputed power. And having conquered the Republic, they naturally sought in it their liberation from poverty and oppression.

At noon on 25 February, day one of the new republic, a detachment of armed workers marched to the Hôtel de Ville. One of their number slammed the butt of his musket on the floor and demanded: "Droit au travail [right to work]".

Blanc, seeing his own slogan menacingly thrust at him, immediately drafted one of the first decrees of the provisional government:

"The provisional government of the French republic pledges itself to guarantee the means of subsistence of the workingman by labour.

It pledges itself to guarantee labour to all citizens."

The same decree announced the creation of 'national workshops' to provide employment for all.

Overnight, the workers of Paris had effectively made Louis Blanc's programme the law of the land, much to the surprise of its author. But Blanc himself was kept as far from the means to realise it as possible. Instead he was given a 'commission' to look into the question of the organisation of labour, without any power or budget to offer any practical solution.

Meanwhile, 100,000 unemployed workers were enrolled into the national workshops. But the task of finding and organising the work for this army of

unemployed was given not to Blanc, but to Alexandre Marie, who was hostile to socialism.

Enrolled workers were given projects such as levelling the Champs de Mars. Employment on more useful projects such as building railways or canals was rejected by the government.

Unsurprisingly this arrangement pleased no one. Respectable society was scandalised by the sight of thousands of workers being paid public money in return for enforced idleness, while the workers themselves were bitterly disappointed.

For them the 'right to work' signified not charity but the organisation of production in order to guarantee useful work to everyone in accordance with their skills.

What they wanted in essence was socialism. What they got was grimly described by Marx as "English workhouses in the open".

The revolutionary clubs

One of the most inspiring products of the February Revolution was the club movement. The 'clubs' took their name from the clubs of the Great French Revolution, but possessed a very different class content.

Even the most radical clubs of the first revolution were a largely bourgeois affair. The clubs of 1848 on the other hand were a cross between workers' assemblies and political parties.

They would meet regularly to discuss the pressing matters of the day, as well as questions of economic and political theory.

By mid-April there were 203 clubs in Paris alone, of which 149 were united in a single federation. They were essentially organs of workers' democracy, growing rapidly out of the daily tasks of the revolution.

Marx described the clubs as "the centres of the revolutionary proletariat", and even "the formation of a workers' state against the bourgeois state".

A key question for the club movement was that of its position in relation to the provisional government: should it support the government, albeit critically, or move to overthrow it? The majority of the Paris clubs took a conciliatory position, seeing their role as a support for and, if necessary, a check on the government.

The attitude of the Provisional Government towards the clubs on the other hand was more of fear and loathing, than surveillance and support. So long as the armed workers were the main power on the streets, the Provisional Government would have to temporise, offering many concessions. But no one in the government had any illusions in this temporary state of affairs.

The government advances

The government was strengthened by the elections, which took place on 23 and 24 April 1848.

All Frenchmen over the age of 21 were eligible to vote for 900 deputies to a single National Assembly. This realised almost all of the political demands of the British Chartists, who had held a huge demonstration in London only weeks earlier.

The result was an overwhelming victory for the provisional government and the bourgeois republic. Almost every successful candidate ran as a 'republican', including many monarchists! This showed the mood that existed in the country. But radical and socialist deputies only took up around 55 of the 900 seats in the assembly.

It must be remembered that the working class constituted a tiny minority of

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the French population at this time, and the vast majority of the electorate were peasants, living in the countryside.

A significant section of the peasantry would later shift violently to the left, but this would take time and experience. It was inevitable that at this stage the socialists would find themselves isolated.

The revolutionary workers in the clubs were disgusted by the result of the election and began immediately calling for the overthrow of the assembly. Meanwhile, the government purged itself of its socialist members, Blanc and Albert, and prepared for war.

On 24 May it was announced that the workers enlisted in the national workshops would either be drafted into the army or forced out of Paris.

The workers were faced with the dissolution of their organisations, deportation, and destitution. On 22 June Louis Pujol, a lieutenant in the workshops, led a demonstration to the Ministry of Public Works and confronted the minister, Marie, who told them, "If the workers don't want to go to the provinces, we shall make them go by force."

That evening Pujol addressed a mass meeting at the Panthéon. "The people have been deceived!" he cried. "You have done nothing more than change tyrants, and the tyrants of today are more odious than those who have been driven out... You must take vengeance!"

The June Days

On 23 June barricades began to rise in Paris. By noon, almost all of the eastern part of the city was under the control of roughly 50,000 insurgents, although the armed fighters were undoubtedly supported by an

His faith in the bourgeois state led him to defend it above all else, even against the very workers it was supposed to serve. This fatal flaw of reformism would return to haunt the working class time and time again throughout the world.

even broader layer of the working-class population.

Meanwhile the National Guard had been called out, but the response was extremely mixed. In eastern Paris, National Guardsmen allowed themselves to be disarmed by the workers or actively joined the insurrection. In the wealthier, western part of the city, however, the response to their orders was emphatic.

By 11 o'clock that evening there were already 1,000 dead, with no end to the fighting in sight. All of the most prominent workers' leaders either betrayed, or were killed, arrested, or in exile. Not a single socialist or radical deputy in the National Assembly supported the insurrection.

The 'democratic socialist' paper, *La Réforme*, explained, "We were ardent revolutionaries" under the monarchy, but "we are progressive democrats under the Republic, with no other code but universal suffrage".

Louis Blanc signed a declaration calling upon the workers to throw down their "fratricidal weapons", alleging they were "victims of a fatal misunderstanding".

In theory, Blanc saw the democratic republic as a means of emancipating the working class. But in practice his faith in the bourgeois state led him to defend it above all else, even against the very workers it was supposed to serve. This fatal flaw of reformism would return to haunt the working class time and time again throughout the world.

A state of siege was officially declared in Paris, and General Eugene Cavaignac was invested with dictatorial powers to defeat the insurrection.

Engels reported, "*Today... the artillery is brought everywhere into action not only against the barricades but also against houses.*" Many captured insurgents were shot on the spot and thrown into the Seine.

In contrast, in the areas under their control the workers maintained perfect order. Only the gun shops were looted, and prisoners taken during the fighting were often set free.

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Defeat

Crucially, the workers fought alone. This fact, above all, determined the result.

The February Revolution had been led by the workers but supported by a decisive section of the small property owners and artisans of Paris, who constituted the majority of the city's population at the time. In June 1848, this 'petty bourgeoisie' sided with the defenders of private property against the workers.

In the meantime, up to 100,000 volunteers from the rural provinces were flooding into the city, travelling from as far as 500 miles away to fight against the insurrection. Blasted by explosive shells and surrounded on all sides, the insurrection began to retreat.

On the third day the tide began to turn against the workers, and on Monday 26 June the last barricade was cleared by Cavaignac's troops. The Paris workers, isolated, without centralised leadership or artillery of their own, had held out for four full days against the full military might of bourgeois 'civilisation'.

The government reported 708 casualties. The total number of insurgents was not accurately reported, but likely mounted into the thousands. Thousands more were deported to penal colonies in Algeria.

Paris had never seen such bloody fighting, which would only be surpassed by the crushing of the Paris Commune in the 'bloody week' of 21-28 May 1871.

What distinguished June 1848 from all previous insurrections was not only its scale. The June Revolution was arguably the first time the proletariat assailed the class rule of the bourgeoisie directly, in its own name. That the workers and their leaders, experimenting and groping their way forward, made mistakes is undeniable; such is the lot of all pioneers.

This was still an early stage in the development of the working class. Not only was there no real party of the working class at this stage, even the trade union movement was under-developed and largely limited to specific crafts.

But that they came so close to victory at a time when they constituted a minority even in Paris, let alone in the rest of France, is much more significant.

The workers had learned and achieved more in just over three months than in the preceding three decades.

Having won the democratic republic, the workers immediately sought to use it for their own ends. Blocked by the very institutions they had brought into being, they created their own democratic organs for the conquest of power and for the socialist transformation of society.



The modern working class is incomparably stronger than it was in 1848, and the possibility of the socialist transformation of society has never been greater. With a revolutionary leadership, guided by the lessons of history, its victory is assured.

And in their defeat, the workers had passed down an immense revolutionary legacy.

Workers' power

The titanic events of June 1848 also had an extremely important impact on the development of Marxism.

Drawing directly from the experience of the Paris workers, Marx issued an address to his organisation, the Communist League, in 1850. In it he insisted that in a future revolution:

"Alongside the new official governments [the workers] must simultaneously establish their own revolutionary workers' governments, either in the form of local executive committees and councils or through workers' clubs or committees."

Further, he explained that the aim of these councils or clubs should not be to support the official government, but to expose and eventually overthrow it, establishing what he termed "the dictatorship of the proletariat" – the class rule of the workers.

"Their battle-cry", he concluded, "must be: The Permanent Revolution". Eventually, what June 1848 only decreed was carried out by the Paris Commune of 1871, the first workers' state in history.

These lessons were also studied carefully by Lenin and Trotsky, who applied them so successfully in 1917.

It is therefore no exaggeration to say there is a direct link between the defeat of the workers in June 1848 and their victory in October 1917.

Today

These events still have a lot to teach us today. Global capitalism faces the deepest crisis in its history. Already, across the globe the masses have toppled one government after another in search of a better life. And this is only the beginning.

In Europe a level of corruption and malaise comparable to the last days of the July Monarchy can be felt by all layers of society.

Like de Tocqueville in January 1848, the most farsighted representatives of the present order see the danger ahead. The volcano of revolution threatens to erupt once again.

But the modern working class is incomparably stronger than it was in 1848, and the possibility of the socialist transformation of society has never been greater. With a revolutionary leadership, guided by the lessons of history, its victory is assured.

Workers of the world unite! ■

UKRAINE WAR

WESTERN IMPERIALISM TURNS TO PESSIMISM



Jorge Martin

It is now over 100 days since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began. There is no end in sight to the war. The gung-ho statements of the West following Russia's withdrawal from the areas it had occupied around Kyiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and Kharkiv, have turned into more pessimistic appraisals.

Russian forces, through superior artillery, have been advancing in the Donbas, slowly, but relentlessly. Ukrainian losses are mounting. Russia has maintained its income from oil and gas, despite the West's sanctions, the knock-on effects of which threaten to push the world economy into a new and damaging recession.

US proxy war

Now US imperialism has redefined its aims in the war. It was, they now said openly, a proxy war being waged in order to decisively weaken Russia.

The US started pouring billions of dollars of equipment and aid into it, and it mobilised its allies to match the effort. But things did not go according to plan.

It is now over a month since the US passed a \$40 billion bill to arm Ukraine. US-made M777 155mm howitzers have been deployed on the battlefield for a

month, together with other pieces of artillery, unmanned aircraft, etc., and yet they have had no significant impact on the course of the war.

Russian superiority in artillery is still overwhelming. The war in the Donbas is not going well. Russia is winning.

"We are just pawns"

The tone of the Ukrainian leadership and the western imperialists has changed markedly. There have been reports about the low morale of the Ukrainian troops.

Ukrainian territorial defence forces – those who joined in the first days of the invasion to defend their country, but above all their homes and their families – are particularly affected. They feel they are being sent to the front as cannon fodder, with neither proper training nor equipment, to die in a war they cannot win.

Several platoons have recorded and broadcast videos of protests. Some have left the front altogether.

The latest figures given by presidential advisor Podolyak are 200 Ukrainian soldiers killed a day. Nikita, a Ukrainian soldier, was quoted in an article in CBC railing against his superiors:

"“You have to understand that there are two castes in this country”, he said. “There’s

the upper caste, and then there’s us: the lower caste. We are just pawns. Nothing more. The upper caste gets the money, and we get the command: ‘Forward!’”

Ukraine is therefore demanding more from its western allies: more tanks, more ammunition. But they are unlikely to get even a fraction of what they are asking for, as they would deplete Western supplies.

The mood in Washington is increasingly pessimistic. Russia is advancing and Western supplies of artillery and other weapons are not having a decisive impact.

At this point, even some Western imperialist strategists might be wondering whether it is worth continuing to sink billions of dollars in equipment into a war which they do not think can be won.

An increasingly costly war

As the war drags on with steady Russian advances, the impact on the world economy is weighing heavily in the calculations of US imperialism and driving a growing wedge between Washington and some of its European allies (France and Germany, but also Italy).

The pressure to find a way out of this increasingly costly war is growing. Italy

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has suggested a peace plan. Macron has repeated his assertion that “Putin cannot be humiliated”. Misgivings amongst the German ruling class about the whole situation are very serious, despite the gung-ho attitude of the Green Foreign Affairs Minister.

The US is caught between different pressures. On the one hand, it sees an opportunity to deal a blow to Russia, using Ukrainian soldiers as cannon fodder for its aims. But on the other hand, it is constrained in the type and range of artillery it can supply Kyiv by the fear of provoking retaliation from Russia (which is, after all, a nuclear power).

Meanwhile, sanctions have not had the desired effect and certainly have not made Putin change course over Ukraine.

The campaign of western sanctions on Russia has definitely had a negative effect on its economy, which is forecast to decline by 8.5% this year. But as the price of oil and gas has gone up as a result, Russia's income from energy exports has actually increased!

In these conditions, Russia is obviously not keen to return to the negotiating table, yet, and is taking preparatory steps to incorporate the Donetsk and Luhansk Republics (where it has imposed a change of leadership), as well as Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, into the Russian Federation proper.

That would mean that in the future, any attack on its presence there would be an attack on Russia, which should act as a powerful deterrent. The basis for any future negotiations will no longer be a return to the *status quo* ante of pre-24 February borders, but rather the current situation on the ground.

Seeing the growing reluctance and difficulties of the Western intervention, this means that *after* the Russians complete the full take over of Donetsk and Luhansk, which can take weeks or even months, they will then be prepared to return to talks and negotiations, whether in the form of a peace agreement or a ceasefire.

Zelensky is hoping that by delaying the Russians long enough, more artillery and weaponry might perhaps be delivered by the West, which would give Ukraine the basis for a counter-offensive now or in the medium term. However, as the losses start to pile up at the front, Zelensky will face growing opposition at home, the beginning of which we can already begin to see.

War is a complicated algebraic equation. On the one hand, we have Putin and Russia's regional imperialist ambitions. Once he has embarked in this war, he cannot leave without having achieved some or most of his aims.

A weakened Ukraine outside of NATO is Putin's main aim, and he now calculates that he can achieve that by the destruction



War is often the midwife of revolution. In fact, the only real way to put an end to war is precisely socialist revolution. We need to understand that war is the inevitable result of capitalist imperialism and can only be ended by overthrowing the whole rotten edifice of the capitalist system.

inflicted through the war and cutting the country off from the Black Sea. At the same time, this would give Russia a land corridor protecting Crimea, the seat of its Black Sea fleet.

On the other hand, we have US imperialism, the most powerful force on the planet, but one which has suffered a relative decline and is being challenged by the rising power of China. It cannot allow itself to be defeated by Russia. That would be a further humiliation and would weaken its global reputation.

In the middle is Ukraine, the theatre of the war, the country which is providing the civilian and military casualties, and the destruction of infrastructure in this conflict between imperialist powers.

Since 2014, it has been ruled by a series of reactionary oligarchic governments which committed themselves decisively with western imperialism. That did not prevent the Russian invasion, and the West has not even offered them EU membership. Sooner or later there will be a revolt against that strategy.

Class war

Finally, there is another element in the equation, which is not generally factored in by military strategists or bourgeois

commentators: the class struggle. The opinion of working-class people is also a factor.

The economic consequences of the war and sanctions are already preparing a wave of industrial militancy in advanced capitalist countries as workers fight back to recover and maintain the purchasing power of their wages in the face of runaway inflation. That will undermine the ability of governments in Europe and the US to pursue this proxy war against Russia.

In poorer, more backward capitalist countries, the impact is even greater and is already leading to social explosions, which can acquire insurrectionary proportions. That will further destabilise world relations.

In Russia itself, once the fog of war dissipates (as eventually it must) workers will settle scores with their own reactionary capitalist government, and its Tsarist imperial delusions of grandeur. This might take a bit longer. As long as Russia seems to be winning, public opinion will hold up.

War is often the midwife of revolution. In fact, the only real way to put an end to war is precisely socialist revolution.

We need to understand that war is the inevitable result of capitalist imperialism and can only be ended by overthrowing the whole rotten edifice of the capitalist system. ■

USA VS. CHINA

TENSIONS MOUNT IN THE PACIFIC



Fred Weston

While a lot of attention is being dedicated to the war in Ukraine, an equally important conflict is developing in the Pacific. It is about who is to dominate this key region: the United States or China? In fact, the main pivot of US foreign policy is against the growing influence of China.

Decline and rise

The US remains by far the most powerful imperialist country on the planet. However, it has undergone an important long-term relative decline.

The USA's weight in the world economy has been reduced since the Second World War. In 1945 it represented over 50% of world GDP, but now is only 24%.

China, on the other hand, has seen its share of world GDP rise from 1.28% in 1980, to 10% in 2013, and over 15% today.

With a much stronger economy, China has become a major capitalist player on a world scale. It is now flexing its muscles and pushing back against US influence in different parts of the world, in particular in South East Asia and the Pacific.

Having become the second economy in the world, it is now also investing huge sums in over 150 countries around the world.

With this level of global reach, comes the desire on the part of the Chinese government to strengthen China's control of trade routes, sources of raw materials, and security in a typically imperialist manner.

China in the Pacific

China has a dominant position in the resource extraction industries across the Pacific. In 2019, it received over half the seafood, wood, and minerals exported out of the area – for a total value of \$3.3 billion.

In line with this, over one quarter of the merchant shipping fleet in the Pacific is Chinese. China has 290 such vessels, more than the combined total of all the countries in the Pacific.

Clearly, the region is of key importance to China. This explains its recent moves to reach deals with a number of countries. This started with the five-year security agreement signed back in April between China and the Solomon Islands. The rationale behind this deal is China's long-term aim of becoming the predominant power in the region.

However, China's interests in the Pacific did not stop at the Solomon Islands.

It is now seeking to broker a deal that will involve around a dozen island nations in the Pacific, involving police, security, and data communication.

If China were to ever clinch this deal – involving trade and security issues – it would massively increase its influence in the whole region.

Counterbalance

Alarmed at the progress that China has been making in the region, Joe Biden has launched an attempt to achieve an economic pact with a number of Indo-Pacific countries, which has in turn angered the Chinese government.

Parallel to this are the US endeavours to strengthen its military position, as can be seen by last year's signing of the AUKUS pact [Australia, UK, and US] – a new security agreement with the UK and Australia, in which the United States will provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines, clearly aimed at China.

On 23 May, an event was organised in Tokyo to launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. It is an attempt on the part of Joe Biden to counter China's

(continues from previous page)

growing influence by bringing together a dozen countries in the region.

The irony here is that most of the countries Biden is trying to woo into a deal have also signed trade deals with China, as part of what is known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

In effect, what we have here is a major fault line in world relations, involving a battle between the most powerful imperialist power on the planet, the United States, and the rising power of China.

China's military muscle

Inevitably at some stage, with growing economic power also comes military power. The United States has \$778 billion of annual military spending, more than the total combined spending of the next nine military powers.

What is worth noting here is that China is the second world spender on arms, and it spends more than the next four powers combined, including Russia. And although it still only spends a little under 2% of its GDP on arms (compared to the 3.7% of the US) it has been growing massively in absolute terms, from just over £20 billion in 2000, to more than ten times that figure.

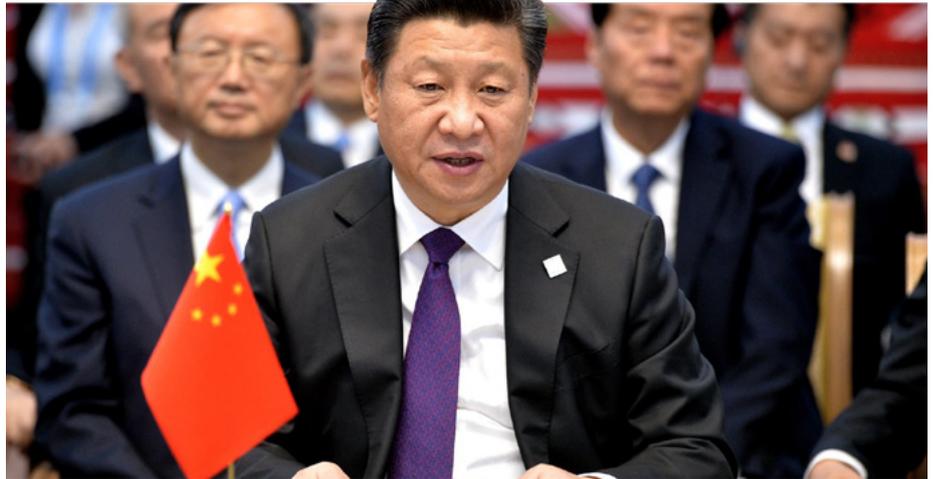
China now has the largest navy in the world, according to Chinese government figures, and it has submarines that can launch nuclear-armed missiles. China's air force has also been massively expanded and has become the largest in the Asia-Pacific region and third largest in the world.

New balance of forces

These are all very good reasons why the US ruling class is worried – very worried indeed – and it is attempting to manoeuvre to regain lost ground. The US is still by far the biggest and most heavily armed imperialist power on the planet, but China – at least in the Indo-Pacific region – has become a major threat to its interests.

For years the US has held to a position of so-called 'strategic ambiguity' on whether it would intervene militarily were Taiwan to be invaded by China. However, recent statements by Biden seemed to shift US policy towards the prospect of direct military intervention. Subsequently, US officials have tried to play this down, but the threat remains and it has angered Chinese officials.

Direct military confrontation between major nuclear powers raises the risk of both sides destroying each other, with neither side coming out as winners. That is not, of course, in the interest of the ruling class. For that reason, the US in any future conflict over Taiwan might seek to bend China through massive sanctions, rather than a direct military intervention, as it is attempting to do with Russia today.



The workers of all countries must come together as a force and overthrow the ruling classes in their own countries. The American, the European, the Chinese workers, together with the workers on all continents, have no interest in fighting fratricidal wars of mass destruction and death.

Such a scenario, however, would lead to a trade war of unprecedented proportions and would be devastating for every economy on the planet. It would lead to immense suffering for millions of people on a scale never seen before in history.

We already see what the sanctions against Russia are achieving: growing poverty in the advanced countries, while the poorer countries are looking at mass starvation.

Power of the working class

However, there is a force in the world that could bring this nightmare scenario to an end – that is, the world working class. There are over three billion workers globally. They and their families, together with the poor and downtrodden of the world, have the power to change all this.

The workers of all countries must come together as a force and overthrow the ruling classes in their own countries.

The American, the European, the Chinese workers, together with the workers on all continents, have no interest in fighting fratricidal wars of mass destruction and death.

In times of war and national chauvinism, Marxists must stand out as internationalists and bring out the common interests of workers of all countries against their national ruling classes.

We need to explain that the workers of China and America have nothing to gain from any future war or conflict between the two countries, not to mention the fact that Taiwan would be destroyed in the process, as Ukraine is today being destroyed before our very eyes.

There is another side to this scenario, however, and that is that the deepening economic crisis, affecting all countries, is also producing a greater and greater questioning of each national ruling class in their respective countries.

Workers and young people are being affected by the cost-of-living crisis, with inflation shooting up everywhere.

This is preparing the ground for intensified class struggle – already reflected in strike activity in one country after another. This comes with drives to unionise unorganised workers, as well as shifts of the mood within the unions towards greater militancy.

We have seen huge protests in countries from Kazakhstan to Sri Lanka, Turkey to Iran, Lebanon to Sudan, and also in the heart of imperialism itself, the United States. In some of these countries, the movements have been of insurrectionary proportions.

It is through these movements that we can begin to see the alternative to war between the nations: war between the classes. ■

Reviews

Top Gun: Maverick

Daniel Morley

This review contains spoilers

“The future’s coming and you’re not in it...The end is inevitable. Your kind is headed for extinction” (Vice Admiral ‘Cyclone’)

Top Gun: Maverick is, like its predecessor, a very expensive recruitment drive for the US Navy. But the world, and US imperialism’s place within it, has changed a lot since 1986.

As a piece of propaganda, it is a call to arms for the US to redouble its efforts to maintain its ailing position as the world’s number one imperialist power. In doing so, it cannot help admitting the reality of America’s relative decline.

Every film needs a personal story. Its protagonist, ‘Maverick’, played by Tom Cruise, is thirty five years older, and approaching retirement. The film begins with him desperately trying to revive the military programme he is a test pilot for, in face of competition for funding from a new drone scheme.

To prove its worth, ‘Maverick’ does something only a human being can do: he breaks the rules, taking the prototype plane beyond its limits. This sets the tone for the film, both on a personal and political level: the film is about arresting decline by means of superhuman efforts.

Nostalgia

Cruise’s character fights against decline by embracing it: he has the same arrogant swagger as his ‘80s version, and seems determined to prove that his dated ways remain the best.

As with so many recent films, it is a nostalgia fest. It is part of an increasingly large number of films and television that revive franchises from several decades ago, such as *Jurassic World*, *Cobra Kai* (*Karate Kid*), *Creed* (*Rocky*), *The Matrix*, and *Trainspotting 2*.

By looking back on the protagonist’s past heroics, and the time that has subsequently

passed, along with all their regrets and the undeniable fact that the hero is now old and tired, these melancholic films appeal to an ageing audience.

The proliferation of these films says a lot about western capitalism and its stagnation. The best culture capitalism now produces is only capable of looking backwards.

Decline

The plot is about the US’ loss of its technological edge to an unnamed country. We are told throughout the film that the enemy has ‘fifth-generation’ fighter planes, that is, the most advanced type of military planes in existence. China and Russia are the only non-western countries to have developed such planes.

Not only that, but the air-defences of the enemy are so advanced as to negate the capabilities of the US’ own fifth-generation fighter plane, and so our heroes are obliged to use the older F-18.

This will put them at a massive disadvantage should they be spotted and dogfights with the enemy’s more advanced planes ensue.

This sets up the basic anxiety the film gives expression to: now that the US no longer has an overwhelming technological edge, how can it continue to dominate and exploit the world?

The film’s answer to this problem is that in such a situation, everything depends on the quality of the human material. Can the US produce pilots sufficiently skilled, intelligent, and brave to overcome the opponent?

Of course, this is militarily false: the US’ military struggle with China will not be played out through dogfights and other forms of toe-to-toe combat, but precisely by means of the deployment of superior military technology. Hence the US’ refusal to intervene directly in Ukraine: direct combat with the Russians would be too costly.

Anxiety

Unsurprisingly, the film concludes that the superior creativity and daring of US pilots will win the day.

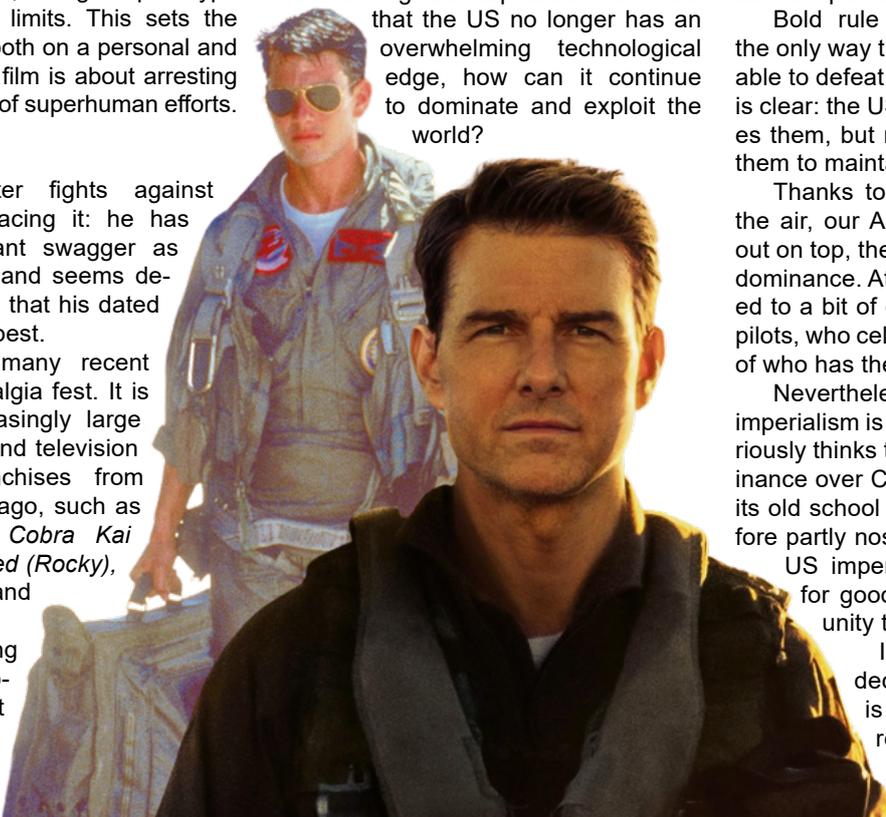
The US paints itself not as imperialist but as the upholder of the ‘rules based international order’. It is for this reason that the film has to justify the mission, which is to destroy an enemy facility, on the grounds that this facility breaks an international treaty. And yet Cruise’s method in the film is to break the rules, to think outside the box, and take the planes beyond their safe limits.

Bold rule breaking is, apparently, the only way their inferior aircraft will be able to defeat the enemy. The message is clear: the US sets the rules and policies them, but must be allowed to break them to maintain its domination.

Thanks to their daring creativity in the air, our All-American heroes come out on top, thereby securing US military dominance. At which point we are treated to a bit of camaraderie between the pilots, who celebrate with a league table of who has the most kills.

Nevertheless, the anxiety of US imperialism is unmistakable. No one seriously thinks the US can maintain dominance over China purely on account of its old school heroes. The film is therefore partly nostalgic wishful thinking for US imperialism, and partly a call for good old-fashioned American unity to confront China.

In reality, the relative decline of US imperialism is irreversible, and for this reason so are the deep divisions in American society. ■



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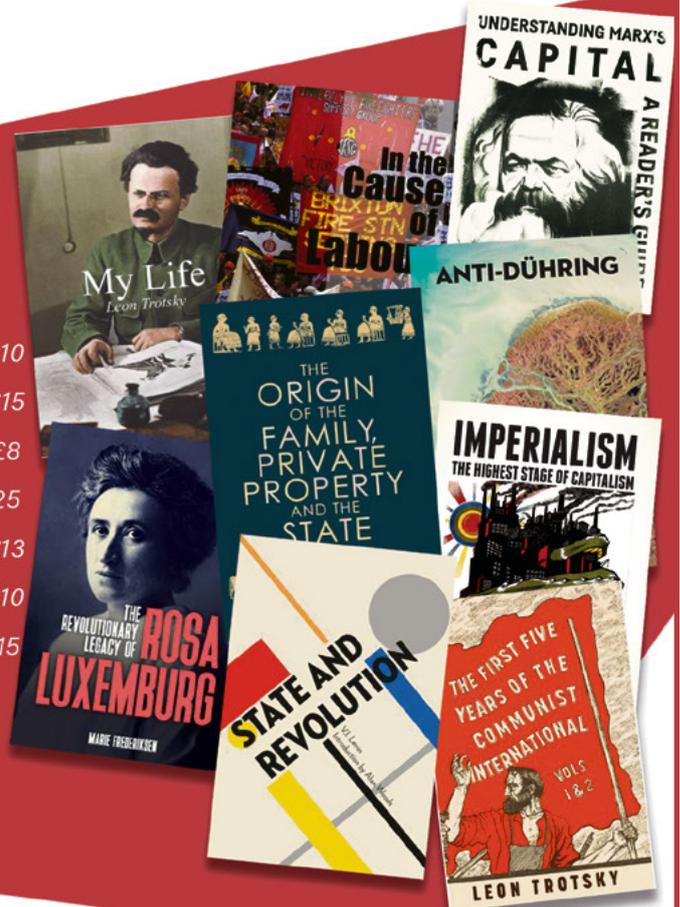
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Letters

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Socialist Appeal
International Marxist
Tendency

OVERCROWDED

Dear Editor,

I have been a reader of SA & IDOM for a few months. It's now my turn to fight back.

So! I feel compelled to write to you regarding my current housing circumstances. My children have recently been placed with me by a judge, this happened on the 28 February 2022. Since then my three children and I have been living in substandard conditions courtesy of Sheffield City Council.

My three children and I are forced to share a single bed flat. The youngest boy is two years old; the 10 and 13 year olds are of opposite sexes.

I have slept on a couch in the living room for the last 13 weeks. This is by no means anywhere near a conclusion. There are houses available but my application simply sits 'awaiting assessment', evidencing the appalling housing crisis.

I'm finally aware of the repression that myself and millions of others suffer due to a totally incompetent government and a toothless opposition.

Comradely, Matt, Rotherham

VICTORY!

Dear Editor,

Socialist Appeal supporters will wish to add their congratulations to the low-paid refuse workers in Rugby (Warwickshire), who through their solidarity have won a significant pay victory in the face of a Tory council which has dragged its feet for months.

No worker takes strike action lightly. But once there was no other realistic option, the drivers, street cleaners, and loaders were determined to win – and they have! They are due pay increases of 12%!

On my visits to the picket line to show support, there was no doubting the firmness of purpose of the strikers or the power of joint action in winning disputes.

This again proves that bold action gets results. Their victory will give strength to the nearby Coventry HGV drivers and other low paid workers who have gone from 'hero to zero' under this Tory government.

A local Marxist

HEAVEN AND HELL II

Dear Editor,

I recently discovered the poem 'Heaven or Hell' about a miner at the Golden Gate,

who enters Heaven after receiving his 'share of Hell' on Earth. An inspiring poem, but I felt it needed a sequel in light of the titanic struggles the working class is moving towards. So I wrote this at work:

*The miners stand at Sallley Gate,
Their heads held proud and high;
Rememb'ring how they fought the state:
"Orgreave will never die.*

*We lost our battle years ago,
Our martyrs rest as heroes.
But feel the tide turn. Hear it grow:
The old mole ever burrows."*

*Now in our hands we'll take our fate,
A new tale's end to tell.
"Storm Heaven here on Earth", we
state:
"We want no share of Hell."*

Forward to the working class, the sleeping giant that grows ever stronger in the struggle to break its chains!

Comradely, Nick Oung

LIGHTING OR TEACHING

Dear Editor,

Liverpool City Council has mismanaged its electricity contract, in a glaring display of incompetency. This has meant that maintained schools are facing an even bigger strain on their budgets.

This time the council completely mismanaged the contracts it had with their electricity supplier. As a result they lost their fixed rate contract and are now stuck on a contract where prices are determined by a volatile market.

This will cost an additional £4.5 million, which the council has said "will [...] put pressure on the budgets of maintained schools". On average each school will have to save around £35,000.

Now you might wonder how schools, having already had their finances bled dry by austerity, might afford these cuts?

A worker on a school's finance team has told me that they will have to undergo a staffing review.

Older staff will be asked to take voluntary redundancy. If matters don't improve pastoral staff and teaching assistants could be given the chop.

Schools will be forced to reduce the quality of their educational provision so they can afford to keep the lights on. Schools are being forced into choosing

between lighting or teaching. The council should be recalled. If these bureaucrats were any normal worker they would be sacked immediately.

However, action should not be limited to this. The incompetency of the council means that schools are being left at the mercy of a volatile, anarchic market system in which privately owned energy companies seek to squeeze as much profit out of our educational institutions.

This has intensified the ongoing attacks on pay and conditions taking place in schools, especially since this attack has come from an unexpected angle.

Therefore alongside the demand to recall the councillors we must demand the nationalisation of the energy monopolies, for schools to be under the democratic control of the staff, and for the bosses to pay for the crisis!

TW, Merseyside

SOLIDARITY

Dear Editor,

I wanted to start by expressing my full solidarity with the RMT in their strike action. The Tory government, and the billionaire-owned media, have responded with reactionary, divisive propaganda, attempting to pit worker against worker and to suppress the RMT's right to strike.

The RMT are striking to protect their wages, their work conditions and, most critically, the safety of their passengers. Overworked, underpaid workplaces are at risk of more errors and faults.

I know this because of my experience as a doctor in the NHS. While the bosses enjoy comfortable salaries, us workers have to toil and suffer to make enough money to pay the bills (and even that is under threat with the cost-of-living crisis). Every day that the NHS is bled dry by austerity, patient safety is at risk.

The government's legal threat to the RMT's right to strike should be an omen to all workers. Today, it's railway workers. Tomorrow, it's healthcare workers or even all workers.

We must fight the capitalist class with a united, militant, working class movement. That is why I support the RMT strike and call on my union, the BMA, to take similarly militant action to protect patients' and workers' welfare.

*Dr Raj Mistry, BMA
(personal capacity)*

THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

SPINOZA

Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677) was born in Amsterdam, the son of a Jewish merchant who had fled from religious persecution in Portugal and Spain.

Spinoza was to carry on the family business, but his outspoken views had rattled the Orthodox Rabbis. Offered 1,000 Florins a year to keep silent, he refused and was expelled from the Jewish community.

Fleeing from Amsterdam to Rijnsburg, Spinoza earned a living polishing lenses. He dedicated his spare time to philosophical writings. He was influenced heavily by Descartes who he regarded as a source of inspiration, but he had too keen an intellect to accept him uncritically.

Spinoza's world outlook was dominated by a passionate interest in science and nature. He conducted correspondence with the English chemist Robert Boyle, discussed comets with Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society, and commented on Descartes' law of motion and the theories of Huygens.

Spinoza did not stand aloof from the political struggle, and put aside work on his Ethics to publish his Treatise on Theology and Politics in 1670. This earned him the enmity of the Calvinists by his attempts to show the Bible as inconsistent and unscientific.

Despite the relative political and religious freedom of the Dutch Republic, the Calvinists succeeded in making their strict doctrine the official religion. This forced Spinoza to keep quiet till his death. His masterpiece, Ethics, had to be published posthumously in the year that he died.

Spinoza, following from Descartes, did not limit his philosophy to the narrow empirical outlook of his time. As such, he was able to rise above the mechanistic approach that dominated the sciences. He pointed towards a genuine scientific approach that understood that reasoning, courage, and imagination were necessary to make hypotheses, as

opposed to just observation of 'the facts' alone.

Hegel remarked "that thought must begin by placing itself at the standpoint of Spinozism; to be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all Philosophy."

The basic idea of Spinoza's philosophy is Monism. Breaking with Descartes and his Dualism, he stated that mind and body were not two separate entities, but part of the same 'substance' that were of different forms.

This single 'substance' that the universe is made of contains within itself all the attributes of thought and being. It is infinite and eternal, and gives rise to the abundance of different phenomena we see in the universe.

Spinoza gave the name of this substance, "God". But to make nature equal to God is to effectively abolish God.

Despite his philosophy's idealist appearance, it was the real point of departure for materialism, in the dialectical, non-mechanical sense. All that we have to do is substitute the word 'matter' for 'God' and we get a consistent materialist position. Spinoza's pantheism is in reality a thinly disguised materialism.

Spinoza stated that matter was self-moving and moves according to its own laws; matter had 'its own cause'. In this he was far in advance of the dominant mechanical materialists of the day who had the conception of matter being moved only by an external force.

Spinoza believed matter and thought to be "one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways". Thought was not opposed to matter, but matter that thinks. This is a radical separation from Descartes' dualism and expresses a dialectical unity between thought and being for the first time.

There is no absolute dividing line separating organic matter from inorganic, or humans from animals, as Descartes thought. This shows how prescient Spinoza's philosophy was, as it is in accordance with the discoveries of modern science.



Spinoza believed the main purpose for the pursuit of human knowledge was for the improvement of man and man's mastery over nature.

Spinoza also advanced the idea that morality was relative and rejected the religious idea of abstract 'free will'.

He advocated a thoroughly determinist position, i.e. that our choices have causes like any other material thing.

Spinoza stated that true freedom consists of understanding the objective laws of nature in order to make them work towards definite human aims. He was therefore the first to recognise the dialectical unity between freedom and necessity.

Spinoza opposed prejudice and superstition, long before the French Enlightenment, and had nothing but contempt for those who go by the will of God and thereby live in the 'asylum of ignorance'.

In short, Spinoza was a hero of philosophy. ■

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PROFITS RISING.**WAGES FALLING.**

OVERTHROW THE BOSSES' SYSTEM!

Dylan Cope

For bankers and bosses, it is the best of times. For ordinary working people, it is the worst of times.

CEO pay is back to pre-pandemic levels, at £3.6 million pounds a year on average. Their bonuses, meanwhile, are almost at a five-year high.

At the other end of society, the working class faces increasing hardship and despair. Inflation – currently at 9%, and set to rise even higher – is eating away at workers' pockets. And extortionate energy bill rises are pushing millions into fuel poverty.

In response, the Tories have announced a one-off £400 payment to all households. But heating and electricity costs are going to increase by double or triple this paltry sum.

This sticking plaster is to be funded by a 'windfall tax' of 25% on the mega-profits

of the energy giants – a drop in the ocean for these fat cats.

Starmer's Labour, meanwhile, has criticised this proposal: not because it falls far short of what is needed, but because it might hurt the value of the energy companies and their shares!

Price hikes are only one side of the problem. Attacks on real wages – by the bosses and the Tories – are the other.

Left Labour MPs have suggested campaigning for a £15 minimum wage to address this. This would be a welcome gain. But even such an improvement would be short lived; quickly eaten away by rising inflation. What we need is a sliding scale of wages, with pay linked to prices.

In any case, the Tories have no intention of raising the minimum wage. In fact, they are threatening attacks on jobs, pay, and conditions for public sector workers. And, as a government of the bosses, their priority is to protect the profits of the capitalists.

What we need is a genuine, lasting solution; a cure that tackles not the symptoms, but the real disease: capitalism.

This means nationalising the monopolies and the banks – without compensation, and under democratic workers' control. The wealth of the billionaire class must be expropriated, not just taxed.

We need economic planning to do away with the anarchy of the capitalist market, and the parasitical profiteering of the bosses.

Only such a programme – a bold socialist programme – can guarantee a decent future for workers and youth.

This is what the trade union leaders should militantly fight for. This means smashing through the Tories' anti-union laws, and launching coordinated action across the movement: to galvanise workers, bring down this criminal government, and overthrow the bosses' system. ■

RMT RAIL STRIKE

MOBILISE TO DEFEAT THE BOSSES AND TORIES!

Nick Oung

south London rail branch

(personal capacity)

Thousands of members of the Rail, Maritime, and Transport (RMT) union are set to take three days of strike action across Britain's railways on 21, 23, and 25 June. This follows on from a resounding ballot in favour of industrial action, with 89% voting to strike.

This wave of strikes will see an estimated 50,000 workers walking out across 13 train operating companies (TOCs) and on Network Rail. In addition, these railway workers will be joined by RMT comrades on London Underground for the first day of action.

Furthermore, train drivers organised in ASLEF at three rail companies are also set to strike. And plans are in place for a strike ballot of TSSA members working in other franchises.

This mobilisation is therefore set to be the biggest strike action seen in Britain for decades.

Belligerent bosses

The demands of the strike – which rail bosses have so far rejected – are focussed on an inflation-matching pay deal, with no compulsory redundancies and no attacks on pensions.

As to be expected, the bosses have responded belligerently to this prospect of a national rail strike. And unsurprisingly, they have been dutifully aided by the gutter press and Tory politicians, who have been running a red scare in an attempt to turn the public against the RMT.

Menacingly, the Tories have even threatened to effectively outlaw strike action on the country's railways, in an attempt to intimidate and bully rail workers. Similarly, the government has warned that it may change the law to allow rail bosses to hire temporary agency staff – i.e. scab labour – in order to undermine and break future strikes.

The union leadership has risen to the challenge, however, responding that: "Any attempt [...] to make effective strike action illegal

on the railways will be met with the fiercest resistance from the RMT and the wider trade union movement."

Cuts and profits

Network Rail CEO Andrew Haines has headed up the capitalist class' propaganda efforts, claiming that a rail strike would cost the network £30 million per day.

This is a tacit admission, however, that it is in fact rail workers who produce all the company's wealth. Without the permission of the workers, not a wheel would turn. Meanwhile, the bosses cream off the profits.

According to RMT general secretary Mick Lynch: "Rail companies are making at least £500 million a year in profits, whilst fat-cat rail bosses have been paid millions during the pandemic."

The truth is that rail workers aren't the ones harming the railways and its passengers. The culprits are the Tories and rail bosses, with their agenda of cuts and profiteering.

The bosses have completely failed to reinvest their super-profits to improve infrastructure, services, and conditions over the years. The £2 billion in cuts proposed by the Tories, meanwhile, will not only lead to a less efficient railway network, but also a more dangerous one.

It is therefore vital that the whole labour movement fights for full renationalisation of

the industry, under the democratic control of rail workers themselves.

Only then, as part of a socialist economic plan, can we provide the investment needed to modernise the country's transport system, in order to provide affordable, safe travel for all.

United action

The aggressive, intransigent attitude displayed by the Tories and rail bosses in response to this potential strike action shows that they are not prepared to seriously negotiate.

It will therefore require a determined, militant struggle to force the bosses and the government to accept our union's demands. Not only are the bosses scared of the damage to their profits, but the Tories are fearful of the reverberations that this national strike could have across society, inspiring other sections of workers to take action.

This strike could therefore provide a real challenge to this decrepit Tory government. To win, we need to mobilise our full forces.

The success of the strike will depend upon the extent that rank-and-file union members are actively involved. This requires workplace discussions to be held in the coming weeks, with strike committees elected and picket duties assigned.

Only by engaging all our forces – including dormant members, workers who have not yet joined the union, and the ranks of other rail unions – can a well-oiled fighting locomotive be built.

Militant struggle

This is a turning moment for the trade union movement, with union members representing civil servants, postal workers, and teachers also set to ballot for national strike action in defence of jobs, pay, and conditions.

Ultimately, we are all fighting against the same attacks. We need a united, co-ordinated response. The whole of the labour movement must therefore come out in active support of these rail strikes, using them to prepare the way for a tsunami of militant united action against the bosses, the Tories, and their bankrupt system. ■



UNISON CONFERENCE

RIGHT WING SMELLS BLOOD AS LEFT RUNS FOR THE HILLS

Unison Socialist

Appeal supporters

The right wing and the bureaucracy have gone on the offensive against the left-led NEC at this year's Unison national delegate conference – using every opportunity and deploying every dirty trick in the book to attack the left, in an effort to restore their control over the union.

On the first day of conference, held in Brighton, the right wing proposed and voted through a motion of no confidence in the NEC, alongside two other factional motions, containing all manner of lies and smears.

Subsequently, scenting blood, the right wing pressed home their advantage, pushing through further punitive motions and rule changes.

By the end of the week, an emergency motion had been tabled, demanding a statement from the NEC in relation to the previously-passed no confidence vote – a calculated attempt to further humiliate and demoralise left-wing activists, in the hope of breaking their resistance.

Behind these orchestrated attacks lies a bureaucratic caste within the union. They are aware of the threat that a genuinely left-led fighting Unison poses to them; to the perks, privileges, and power that these unaccountable officials have traditionally enjoyed.

And behind them stands the weight of the establishment and the ruling class, who are determined to keep Britain's largest union – representing 1.3 million public sector workers – under their control.

As such, these unscrupulous ladies and gentlemen are prepared to do whatever it takes to remove the left from their democratically-elected positions. Bullying behaviour; campaigns of harassment; outright slander: nothing is off the table. They are ruthless – willing to win by any means necessary.

Concessions

To fend off such a vicious assault requires an iron determination and resolve; a bold leadership that is able to stand firm in the face of intimidation, and prepare the ground for a counter-offensive. Unfortunately, and disastrously, the left have taken precisely the opposite approach.

In response to the strident demands of the right wing's emergency motion, the so-called left-led NEC threw in the towel and presented a grovelling statement of apology: wringing their hands for all the 'mistakes' they have been falsely accused of; and promising to mend their ways, if only their shrill critics would allow them to continue in office.

But the experiences of the Corbyn movement have demonstrated a thousand times over that the right wing of the labour movement will stop at nothing. No amount of concessions or apologies will appease them.

Rather, such timidity will do nothing but embolden the right wing. Given an inch, they will go on to demand a mile.

All the while, this capitulation will only serve to confuse and demobilise rank-and-file activists in Unison, who have

worked tirelessly to see a left majority elected onto the NEC, under the *Time for Real Change* (TFRC) banner.

Similarly, every compromise that the Corbyn leadership made only added to the demoralisation and disorientation of left-wing Labour members, turning a retreat into a rout.

As we have explained from the start, the only way to win this fight against the right is to organise amongst the grassroots; to actively involve existing members and new layers in this struggle; and to enthuse them with clear socialist policies.

Instead, TFRC has allowed battles to be confined to the top table and the union's sub-committees, well away from the eyes of rank-and-file members.

Whenever Corbyn came under attack, it was grassroots activists on the ground who mobilised to save him, through local networks built up in-and-around the CLPs. *Time for Real Change*, by contrast, has failed to build such a base.

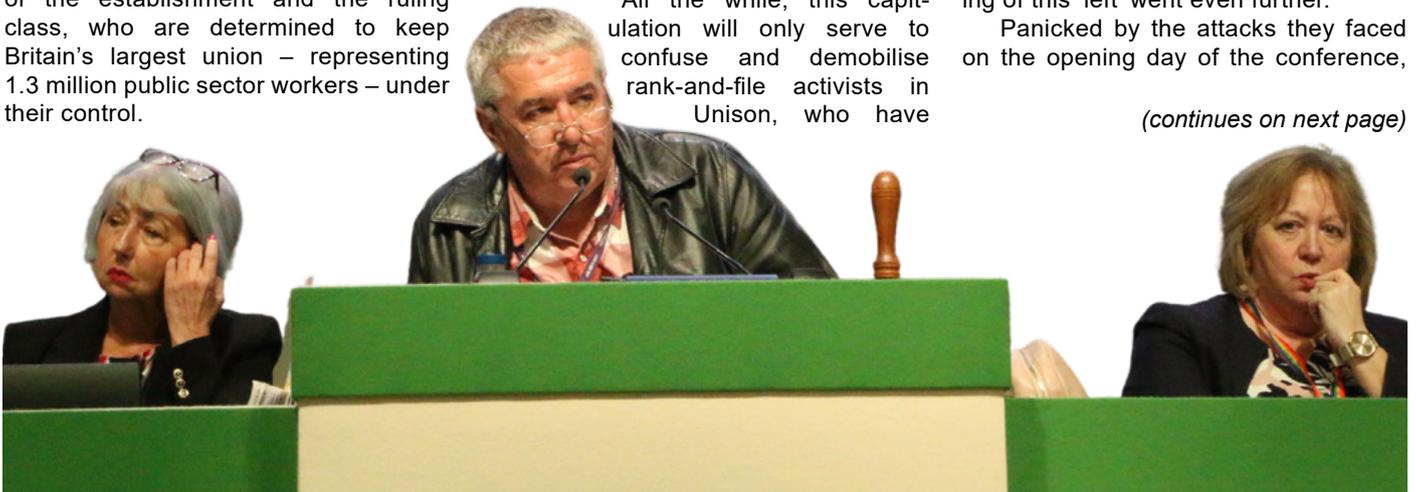
Instead, the group simply hoped that last year's NEC election results would automatically be translated into a majority amongst the delegates at the national conference. Now we see the price the movement will have to pay for this complacency.

Cowardice

Unfortunately, however, the backtracking of this 'left' went even further.

Panicked by the attacks they faced on the opening day of the conference,

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and by the vitriol aimed at then-Unison President Paul Holmes in particular, the left NEC grouping later met to propose a new presidential team – one that excluded Paul.

At this meeting, to which Paul had not been invited, sectarian activists from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Alternative demanded that Paul be thrown under the bus.

Arguing that Paul was ‘damaged goods’, they naively claimed that a change at the top was needed to placate the right wing. Better yet, they argued, replacing him with a woman or a black member would defang the right in terms of their spurious accusations of misogyny and racism against the left.

Clutching at straws, the rest of the so-called left began to line up behind this plan. And in the end, this cowardly, treacherous effort succeeded, forcing Paul to resign from his position as president – and from *Time for Real Change* itself – in response. These ‘lefts’ should hang their heads in shame.

We must be clear about what has happened. The aim of this despicable ‘palace coup’ was to offer the right wing a sacrificial lamb.

By handing the enemy Paul’s scalp, these backstabbers, parading as ‘lefts’, hope to save their own political skins, and desperately cling onto their elected positions.

In effect, they have joined the witch-hunting campaign being waged against Paul by the employers and the right wing, with the help of the sectarian Socialist Party. And as already stated, this will also do nothing at all to appease the left’s opponents, but will only embolden them.

The new presidential team – along with the rest of the ‘left’ on the Unison NEC, and at other levels within the union – will face the same merciless attacks, with any smear or slander that the right wing cares to dig up, or simply invent.

Similarly, repeated admissions of guilt regarding supposed ‘antisemitism’ were never enough to satisfy Corbyn’s objectors. And the same will be true when it comes to charges of sexism, racism, etc. against these ‘lefts’.

This shows the poisonous role of identity politics within the labour movement: a weapon that the right wing will happily – and cynically – turn against the left. And sectarian groups such as the SWP play an equally pernicious part in pandering to such ideas, in effect acting as the handmaidens of the right wing.



The current ‘left’ leadership in Unison has fallen at the first real test. What is needed is a hardened, militant left leadership – one that will not bend, compromise or buckle in the face of the right wing’s attacks.

Belligerence

Having seen these ‘lefts’ panic and crumble under pressure, the right wing’s belligerence will only intensify.

Given all this, the situation looks grim indeed. This is entirely thanks to the spinelessness of the so-called left. While the ‘left’ still hold a majority on the NEC for now, things do not augur well for them.

They have been dealt a series of serious blows by the right. And their response to these attacks has exposed the tremendous weakness at the heart of the grouping.

If they continue down this road, allowing themselves to be pushed around by the right wing, and only struggling for positions rather than power, then the end result will be disaster and defeat for the mass of low-paid workers who are yearning for a fighting union.

The Unison bureaucracy will go to every length in order to take full control of the union. And once this is achieved, the right wing will show the kind of tender

mercy that its counterpart in the Labour Party showed to the ‘left’ there.

Activists identified as TFRC supporters will be targeted *en masse*. And the bureaucracy will attempt to completely rewrite the rules, so as to prevent a left insurgency from winning a majority on the NEC again.

Leadership

The genuine left must fully digest the lessons of the Corbyn movement, and from these recent events inside Unison. Weakness only invites aggression. We cannot afford to naively expect otherwise.

The current ‘left’ leadership in Unison has fallen at the first real test. What is needed is a hardened, militant left leadership – one that will not bend, compromise or buckle in the face of the right wing’s attacks.

This is what Socialist Appeal – the Marxist tendency in the British labour movement – is attempting to build. We urge you to join us in this task. ■

TORY WAR ON CIVIL SERVANTS

PCS RESPOND WITH PLAN FOR NATIONAL ACTION

A PCS workplace

advocate

Civil servants have found out through the media about the Tory government's plans to cut 91,000 jobs over the next three years. This is the most severe attack on the civil service in many years.

These cuts will mostly be carried out through not renewing fixed-term contracts, and by not refilling vacancies from natural turnover. But redundancies are also inevitable. This is why the Tories are now also trying to cut redundancy payouts.

One-in-five jobs are under threat. On average, therefore, a team of eight will have to do the same work as a team that was previously ten, with no extra pay.

In fact, the 2-3% pay increase the government is offering civil servants will mean a pay cut in real terms, as inflation heads above 10%, and as fuel and energy bills skyrocket.

Collapse

Workers in the passport office, DVLA, or DWP are already struggling with workloads and backlogs.

Instead of expanding its workforce, the DWP is closing offices, forcing some workers to commute unreasonable distances just to get to work.

This shows the true cost of such cuts. It won't just be civil servants who are hammered, but public services and the working class overall.

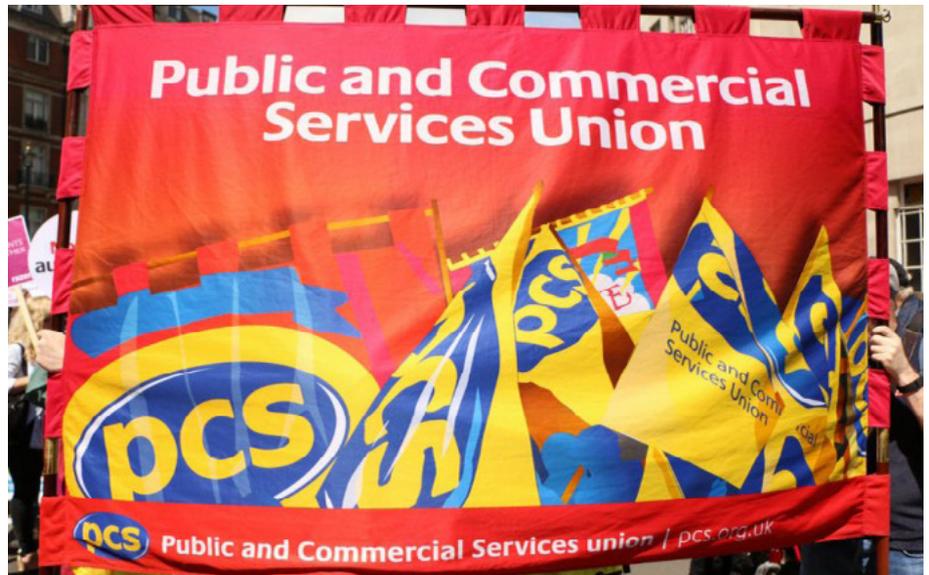
If these 91,000 jobs are cut, then who will do the work? Who will ensure that driving licences are issued on time, that passports are sent out to those who have applied for them, or that welfare payments are processed for those who need them?

People who rely on these services are being sacrificed by the government in the name of 'efficiency savings' – i.e. austerity. That all of these things, amongst many others, are vital to ordinary workers means nothing whatsoever to the Tories and their capitalist backers.

Fightback

The need for a union fightback was well understood by delegates at the recent national conference of PCS, which represents civil servants.

The response to the government's cuts was overwhelming, with speaker after



The maximum possible unity must be built in order to win this fight – both in terms of civil servants' struggle to defend jobs, pay, and conditions; and across the labour movement more generally.

speaker taking to the podium to express their determination to struggle.

By an enormous majority, delegates voted in support of a national strike ballot, committing the union to engage in battle with the Tories.

Calling such a dispute is absolutely the right response. This should be accompanied by steps towards unified action alongside other unions.

On its own, PCS can put up one hell of a fight. If industrial action were coordinated with other public sector unions, however, it would be unstoppable.

Unity

Workers across the board – in the public and private sector – are ultimately fighting the same struggle: against the bosses, the Tories, and their bankrupt, crisis-ridden system.

As such, what is needed is a joint campaign across the trade union movement against this criminal Tory government, beginning with a one-day public

sector strike as a demonstration of our strength.

The maximum possible unity must be built in order to win this fight – both in terms of civil servants' struggle to defend jobs, pay, and conditions; and across the labour movement more generally, to protect public services and reverse austerity.

Once the organised working class demonstrates that a fightback is possible, those not currently not in unions will soon follow. Faced with such a force, the government would soon find out who is really responsible for keeping society running.

Save jobs and services! Every single fixed-term contract worker must be made permanent!

Engage union reps, advocates, and members at every level for a united fightback!

For a one-day public sector strike – the first step in a mass campaign to bring down this Tory government! ■

POVERTY PAY AND OUTSOURCING UNIVERSITY WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Leeds Marxists

After 12 years of below-inflation pay, higher education (HE) staff organised in Unison are at breaking point. The bosses – in collaboration with university bureaucrats – are stopping at nothing to protect their profits and push down wages.

As one worker organised in Unison at the University of Leeds told Socialist Appeal: “When you have a full-time job, you shouldn’t have to sit at home without the heating on, while your vice chancellor is on a six-figure salary.”

The money is clearly there to pay staff a decent wage – it is simply in the wrong hands. The University of Leeds has £700 million in reserves, for example. But this is either being hoarded, or is spent on flashy new buildings.

“Members are telling us they can’t afford to live on their wages,” stated Leeds University Unison Branch secretary Angela Blackburn.

“They’re having to get second jobs, cut back on necessities and use food banks... This is unprecedented.”

Preparing for action

University workers are not rolling over, but are fighting back.

From 20-24 June, members of Leeds University Unison will be taking strike action to fight for an above-inflation pay rise. And unless the bosses come back with an improved offer, they will likely be hit by more action, as the branch is preparing for another ballot in July.

The University of Leeds branch has been one of eight HE branches that have led the way with this militant action, fighting against last year’s pathetic 1.5% pay offer.

Now, the results of a recent national consultative ballot on this year’s 3% pay offer reveal that 83% of members across the UK want to reject this offer, and move to a ballot for industrial action. This could potentially see campuses shut down at the start of the next academic year.

Campus unions: unite!

Elsewhere, other unions representing non-academic university staff are also fighting back.

At the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), workers organised in the Independent



The fight on campus for improved pay and against outsourcing should be turned into a fight against unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, and for universities free from profit, run by staff and students.

Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) union are waging a struggle against low pay.

And another campaign is underway against outsourcing at nearby University College London, also led by the IWGB. Meanwhile, campaigns by Unite members at the University of Cambridge – against outsourcing and for better pay – continue on.

These workers face the same issues. As such, the fightback must be united, with campus unions coordinating nationally to take on university bosses.

Unison should take a lead on this, as the largest (and most well-resourced) of the unions organising non-academic staff.

Importantly, these unions could provide a much-needed injection of energy and militancy into the national dispute of academic staff in the UCU, which – due to poor leadership – is currently seeing a disorganised, although temporary, retreat.

Success and momentum behind these other campaigns could see

the tables turn in the favour of more militant rank-and-file layers within the UCU, however, who are crying out for a renewed struggle against university bosses.

Staff-student control

All of these attacks on university workers and students are the product of the marketisation of education; the direct consequence of capitalism. Rather than invest in staff and decent services for students, management is more concerned with turning a profit.

As such, the fight on campus for improved pay and against outsourcing should be turned into a fight against unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, and for universities free from profit, run by staff and students.

This is the programme that higher education unions should be fighting for, in coordination with the student movement: a socialist system of education, funded by expropriation. ■

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