

# JOIN SOCIALIST APPEAL!

# FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION!

Socialist Appeal is the Marxist tendency in Britain. Marxism has a long history within the labour movement, providing a class analysis of events.

Reformists look to patch up capitalism. They want a nicer, kinder capitalism. But this is impossible. Capitalism is crumbling, experiencing the deepest of all crises. It cannot be reformed.

Marxists, in contrast, believe that the problems of the working class can only be resolved by the overthrow of capitalism. We therefore stand for the socialist transformation of society - in Britain and internationally.

As Marxists, we stand for the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. These ideas provide us with an understanding of capitalism, and of the strategy needed to fight for world socialist revolution. That is why theory is vital - as the key to understanding the past, present and future.

As internationalists, we work with activists



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TO OUR WEBSITE,  
EVENTS,  
ARTICLES, THEORY  
AND MORE!**

from the International Marxist Tendency, in order to fight for these ideas on a world scale.

We are facing revolutionary crises across the planet. The consciousness of the working class is being radically transformed.

The difference between reformism and Marxism can be seen as the difference between foresight over astonishment. We can see the massive class struggles ahead, in which the task of transforming society along socialist lines will be posed.

In Britain, the immediate task facing us is the building of a powerful Marxist tendency that can intervene in these struggles - in the mass movements of workers and youth. We must create a leadership that is prepared to go all the way, to the end.

This will not happen by itself. Every worker, student, unemployed person – young and old – must get involved in this fight to change society. Don't stand on the sidelines – your help is needed!

✉ **CONTACT@SOCIALIST.NET**

🌐 **WWW.SOCIALIST.NET**

📘 **SOCIALIST APPEAL**

🐦 **@SOCIALIST\_APP**

📷 **@SOCIALIST\_APPEAL**



# SOCIALIST★APPEAL

KILL THE BILL PAMPHLET - APRIL 2021

**END STATE REPRESSION!**

**MOBILISE TO DEFEND THE**

**RIGHT TO PROTEST!**

**KICK OUT THE TORIES!**



**SOCIALIST APPEAL  
SUPPORTERS**

**The proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will give the police new powers to protect themselves, disperse protests, and introduce tougher sentencing.**

It will allow police to impose conditions such as “start and finish times and maximum noise levels on static protests” – previously applied only to marches. And where noise causes, or may cause, “serious annoyance or... inconvenience” to people or organisations, the police will be able to apply restrictions.

In fact, this legislation gives Priti Patel, the power to create laws – without parliamentary approval – to define what she (or her successors) believes constitutes a “serious disruption” to communities and organisations.

The bill reads as a carte blanche for the police and government to wield control over protests, whatever way they deem fit. Wherever you look in the legislation, it works to increase the power of the police, allowing them to define at whim what is and isn't a lawful protest.

### **Explosive anger**

But the attack by the Tories on our basic democratic rights is just the tip of the iceberg for those protesting to ‘kill the bill’. It is no coincidence that only a week before the first Bristol protest, police in London violently crushed a peaceful vigil to mourn the death of Sarah Everard – who was seemingly killed at the hands of a serving police officer.



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Anger against the police has been brewing for years, or indeed decades. Millions are fed up at the everyday racist harassment of black and Asian youth, as highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Women who suffer sexual assault and rape are routinely ignored by the police. In fact, with this new Bill, those found guilty of the 'crime' of toppling statues of racists could face prison sentences of up to 10 years – five years more than convicted rapists! This raises the real question of who, or what, these laws and institutions are intended to protect.

The police not only protect their own before the public. The officer accused of Sarah's murder, for example, was still working for the Met despite being reported for indecent exposure. But, as an arm of the state, they function to protect the power and property of the capitalist class and their system; and to repress the working class and the oppressed.

Is it therefore any surprise that thousands have reached the point where they feel 'enough is enough'? And that this accumulated anger should explode onto the streets?

## Running scared

The number and militancy of protests in Britain has also increased in recent years: from Extinction Rebellion (XR), whose activists have glued themselves to trains; to the Black Lives Matter protesters who toppled the statue of slave holder Edward Colston.

Priti Patel has made clear on more than one occasion she is no friend to protesters: from branding XR activists as "eco-crusaders turned criminals"; to asserting that the Black Lives Matter protests were "dreadful". These statements are simply a reflection of the reactionary views held by the whole ruling class.

With this bill, the Tories aren't attempting to curtail protests out of heartfelt concern for their impact on local communities or passers-by. They are acting in the interests of the bosses, trying to repress the increasingly militant protests that are erupting onto our streets.

These protests are a response to the crisis of the very system the Tories serve and protect. In turn, they provide a visible point of



opposition to this exploitative and oppressive system, giving confidence to other workers and youth to join the struggle.

That is why the ruling class and their representatives want to crush these protests. That is why the government has rushed through the introduction of this bill. They are scared that in the future, it won't just be statues that are toppled, but their whole rotten system.

## Hypocrisy

In Bristol, the escalation of peaceful marches into pitched street battles has drawn the attention of the establishment.

There, riot police came out with mounted units and dogs, beating protestors with batons after they staged a sit-down protest outside the Bridewell police station. There are even reports of the police using pepper spray.

Immediately the establishment have used these events to try and justify granting the new repressive powers to the police. They continue to kick an angry dog, and then cry for a tighter collar when it starts to growl back!

The violence in Bristol, goaded out of some protestors by these attacks, has of course become the focus. Home Secretary, Priti Patel, condemned the first Bristol protests – which saw police vans set on fire, and police station windows smashed – as "thuggery and disorder".

As Marxists, we do not join in this hypocritical chorus of denunciation. Ultimately, it is capitalism and all its institutions – including the Tories and the police – that are responsible for violence on a systemic scale. The real "thugs" are to be found in the establishment: those that defend a system which condemns millions to poverty, for the sake of the riches of a few.

At the same time, however, we must point out that smashing a few police windows will not bring us any closer to ending this rotten, oppressive system. This can only be achieved by an organised struggle of the working class, based around a socialist programme to transform society.

## Mass mobilisation

Prior to the peaceful protest at Clapham Common in London, brutally repressed by police, Labour leader Keir Starmer was planning to whip MPs to abstain on the bill. Starmer's quick U-turn to vote against it is by no means indicative of a change of heart. Rather, this again is a result of the mass pressure from below.

Equally, the splits in the Tory Party over the Bill following protests are indicative of this pressure. This demonstrates the utter instability of this Tory government – a government riddled with crisis.

While this repressive bill may have passed its second reading, the recent protests show the way forward to stopping it. Workers and youth must rely on their own strength. We need organisation and mass mobilisation to smash through these oppressive laws.

The Black Lives Matter protests, for instance, also took place in the middle of the pandemic, breaking COVID restrictions. But they were massive, with over 200,000 people joining protests across the UK, despite taking place in the middle of the first lockdown. These demonstrations, therefore, could not be easily suppressed by the state.

The lesson is clear. Militancy pays. Mass mobilisation on the streets could do more than just change the opinion of a few MPs; it could force the Tory government to back down entirely.

This resistance cannot be left to individuals. At present, the tops of the trade unions and the Labour Party are holding this struggle back. Just imagine how powerful the movement would be if the leaders of the labour movement mobilised and organised their ranks.



Rather than a few thousand coming out to protest in a handful of cities, we could see a mass movement of millions of workers and youth. Faced with this, no amount of repressive Tory laws or policing could hold back the struggle!

## Organise!

Workers and youth can have no confidence in Keir Starmer – or any of the establishment's agents in the labour movement – to lead this movement. It is vital that the left seizes the moment to flush out those holding us back, and transform the unions and Labour Party into vehicles for struggle.

The labour movement needs to organise not just against this new law, but against all other restrictions on protesting. This must include, in particular, the oppressive anti-trade union laws, which limit the rights of workers to organise and strike.

In the final analysis, there is no force on earth that can stop the working class when it is organised and mobilised!

In the face of a genuine mass movement, all these repressive laws would become mere words on paper. The state would be powerless and paralysed. This new Tory bill must therefore be met head on with class struggle. We need to organise to overturn this whole rotten status quo.

Only then will we have real control over our lives and communities. Only then will we have real freedom to express ourselves. Only then will women – and all those who have experienced violence and oppression on our streets – get the protection they need.