

REVOLUTION

MARXISTSTUDENT.COM

ISSUE 11

VOICE
OF THE
MARXIST STUDENT FEDERATION

“THE GREAT ONLY APPEAR GREAT BECAUSE WE ARE ON OUR KNEES.

LET US RISE” - JAMES LARKIN

MSF★

SICK OF THIS ROTTEN SYSTEM?

**JOIN THE
MARXISTS!**

**EDUCATE.
AGITATE.
ORGANISE.**





Since lockdown began, many questions are on people's minds. One which has been brought into our consciousness in the clearest way is the history of the black struggle and racism in society. Education is run in favour of the ruling class, which wants to keep Britain's vile history of racism a secret. The Marxist Student Federation wants to tell the truth about Britain's history. Capitalism and racism have gone hand in hand for many years, and the first step to fighting against this is understanding what has really happened! Help us fight against the lies of the British ruling class!

FIONA LALI NATIONAL ORGANISER

The toppling of the statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol on 11 June has brought to attention Britain's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. Although officially abolished in Britain in 1807, this horrific trade in human beings was central to the rise of capitalism and the rise of Britain as a world power in particular.

Slavery has existed throughout the history of class society in various places. But it is understood most commonly today as the barbaric episode in which humans were brought from West Africa and transported to plantations in America and the Caribbean. In the early 15th century, Portugal 'explored' the coast of Africa, primarily in search of gold. It was the first European country to do so. And the Portuguese quickly enjoyed

the prospect of trade with Africa without having to go through the block of the Islamic countries in the north. At this stage, although trade in slaves did take place, it was in small numbers. Gold was the real prize. In the 1470s, for example, the Portuguese reached what became known as the 'Gold Coast' – Ghana. In the next period, we see the beginnings of African gold being traded into Europe. At this stage, Britain could only look upon Portugal in envy. Eventually though, the trade in human beings became the more profitable enterprise.

Architect of slavery

In time, Britain caught up. British involvement in the trade began around the middle of the sixteenth century. Britain soon became a key architect of the transatlantic slave trade. Through this, it acquired the high profit levels necessary to become a mighty capitalist power.

Companies that participated in the slave trade were an important part of the industrial revolution. For the rising capitalist class, the slave trade played a pivotal role in the expansion of the global market. In the words of Karl Marx:

"It is slavery which has given value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created world trade, and world trade is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. Consequently, prior to the slave trade, the colonies sent very few products to the Old World, and did not noticeably change the face of the world."

Portugal and Britain were the two most 'successful' slave-trading countries, accounting

for about 70% of all Africans transported to the Americas. Although there were ports in Liverpool, Bristol, Portsmouth and Lancaster, much of Britain did not see first-hand the nature of slavery.

Britain's wealth came from trade, rather than an internal economy dependent on the labour of slaves, as was the case in America. The ideological defence of slavery and racism was therefore intensified in the American states – in part due to the physical presence of the plantations.

Britain's domination peaked between 1640 and 1807, when the British slave trade was technically 'abolished'. In the United States, however, slavery continued right up to and throughout the civil war, only ending in 1865.

Economic motivation

The British ruling class has a misguided sense of superiority on the matter of abolition. It was indeed the first to do so (although in reality it continued up until the 1830s).

However, this was not on account of some sudden change of heart regarding the enslavement of black people. Rather, it was motivated purely by economic interest, as the dawn of capitalist society meant that slavery was less profitable than 'free' wage labour.

A.L. Morton notes in his work, *A People's History of England*: "Profitable as the slave trade proved during the 18th century, its suppression in the 19th century was even more profitable." Slavery, in short, simply became uneconomical.

REVOLUTION FESTIVAL 23 - 25 OCTOBER 2020

THE OLD WORLD IS DYING
THE NEW STRUGGLES TO BE BORN

HOSTED BY:
SOCIALIST APPEAL

THREE DAY FESTIVAL OF MARXIST IDEAS

Revolution 2020 is a three-day festival of Marxist ideas, with 20 sessions covering current events, history, philosophy, and economics. The theme of this year's event is A World on Fire. From the global COVID-19 pandemic, to the climate catastrophe, to the mass movements against racism and oppression: it is clear that the system is broken. With capitalism in its deepest ever crisis, and with the status quo collapsing all around us, we will be discussing the revolutionary ideas needed for activists looking to organise, fight, and transform the world today. Buy your ticket from revolutionfestival.co.uk - we hope to see you there, wherever that may be!

RESULTS DAY FIASCO

The recent A Level fiasco has proved what we all knew, that the ruling class will throw away the lives of young people to keep the status quo in place. Between this debacle and the fact that young people are being forced back into an unsafe school environment to get the economy going again, we can see the callousness with which this Conservative government is treating us. On Thursday 10th September, the Marxist Student Federation is holding an online meeting to talk about how to fight back against the inequality in education. Speaking will be a teacher from the NEU, an English A Level student, a Scottish school student and an organiser from the MSF. [The recent U-Turn of the government](#) shows that militant action works! We need to keep this up to secure more change for young people. Join the meeting. Join the fight!

DONT LET THEM STEAL YOUR FUTURE JOIN THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION

Thursday 10th September 6pm
Meeting ID: 898 6480 6409
Passcode: 572186

