

REVOLUTION

MARXISTSTUDENT.COM

ISSUE 14



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DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST! FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!



WHY WE FIGHT



The Marxist Student Federation is a group of young revolutionaries, working to build a revolutionary organisation across the world.

We have over 30 Marxist Societies across the country, in various Universities. These societies discuss the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky as well as getting involved in local campaigns and movements. Our aim is to build an alternative to the world we see around us now.

We believe that the capitalist system is responsible for massive exploitation and oppression of workers and



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youth. We can see the suffering that capitalism is causing all around us.

A huge section of the British population is homeless, while next to them lies enough empty homes to house them easily. This is a product of capitalism. Racist and homophobic policing is rampant. This is a product of capitalism. The handling of the coronavirus has led to massive unemployment and avoidable deaths. This, again, is a product of capitalism.

The MSF is discussing the issues of capitalism and fighting against all the effects of it. **Join us and fight the capitalist system!**



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LIKE WHAT YOU READ? JOIN US TODAY!

STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE KILLING THE BILL IN READING

The brutal suppression of Sarah Everard's vigil, on the 13th of March, brought to public attention the draconian 'Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill'.

If passed, the bill would dramatically curtail the right to protest, granting the police new powers to 'protect' themselves and disperse peaceful protests. In essence, it would be a blow to the working class, restricting us of our weapons: unity and action.

It is thus no wonder that the bill sent shockwaves across the most revolutionary layers of society, bringing forth mass protests across the country under the common banner of 'Kill the Bill'.

We entered the first protest intending to get the message out that the police do not stand for the working class! We handed out 60 leaflets and talked to many people.

We took the initiative and organised the second protest ourselves, setting up a 'Kill the Bill' Instagram page - in line with the national day of action. This gathered a lot of traction, with organisations such as Reading BLM and Extinction Rebellion - each with several thousand followers - openly declaring solidarity.

As such, the second protest was at least twice as

large as the first, with around 150 people in attendance - this was despite it being Easter weekend!

As with the previous protest, we stepped onto the podium and announced the plan: speeches, discussions, and a minute's silence to remember the victims of police oppression. Our speeches were passionately received with cheers and applause, in which we expressed the necessity for a decisive battle against capitalism.

Evidently, some protestors had arrived at these conclusions already, many of whom approached us to learn more about Socialist Appeal and the Marxist Student Federation. As I write, we are organising a third protest, set to take place on the 17th of April - we expect this will be the biggest yet.

By Reading Marxists

SARAH EVERARD'S MURDER ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The killing of Sarah Everard shocked Britain and people all over the world. This terrible act of violence sparked anger amongst women in Britain, who had enough of all the traumatising experiences they live through day-in, day-out as a result of this oppressive system.

"Killed by the system we're told 'protects' us," were the words on one of the placards at the vigil held on the 13th of March in London. This became a protest against the violence, oppression and unsafe conditions that women face under capitalism.

VIOLENCE IN BRITAIN

Tragically, the murder of Sarah Everard is only the tip of a very large iceberg.

In Britain, every three days a woman is killed by a man, and every four days it's by a current or a former partner. A recent study by UN Women UK, also revealed that more than four-fifths of young women in the UK have been subjected to sexual harassment.

They also warn that most women have lost faith that the abuse will be dealt with. In fact, 96% of respondents did not report incidents, with 45% saying it would not change anything.

And the conditions that women face have only worsened. Millions of working-class women have been forced back into the domestic household due to the pandemic. This is accompanied by an increase in domestic abuse.

And this is not just in the UK. This is a worldwide trend, which has sparked protests in Mexico, Chile, Pakistan, Poland, and many other countries.

As capitalism goes into crisis, it is working-class women who are being made to pay. Female unemployment has increased sharply worldwide. In the UK, the full impact of job losses is yet to be realised due to the furlough scheme; but data shows that women are at greater risk of losing their jobs when these schemes come to an end.

This isn't going to be a temporary setback either. For example, the sectors of the economy expected to be hit hardest in the post-COVID-19 world are hospitality and retail – both of which employ a large number of female workers.



What happened to Sarah Everard is something every woman lives in fear of. We are told from a young age: "Wear bright clothes"; "Walk down well-lit streets, keys in your hand", etc., etc. This is no way to live. It shouldn't be necessary. And we mustn't accept it. Enough is enough. This system is killing us.

Decades of progress have been undone in the space of months. This shows how fragile our freedoms, rights, and gains are under capitalism – a system in terminal decline.

There is nothing 'natural' about the oppression that women suffer. It is a product of class society.

It is the capitalists who benefit from our oppression and exploitation. From them, it means a cheap labour force; it gives them the power to push women in and out of the market as they please; and it allows corporations to objectify our bodies for their profits.

It is on these material conditions that our sexist, misogynist society is built. The emancipation of women can never be achieved under capitalism, which holds working people – both women and men – in subjugation.

This system is simply not capable of permanently securing progress for the working class. In order to get out of the crisis that the capitalist system is in, the ruling class will go on the attack against every past reform that has been won through struggle.

Working-class women, doubly oppressed and exploited under capitalism, carry this burden. This means increasing precariousness, increasing poverty, increasing overwork, and increasing violence.

REVOLUTION AND LIBERATION

However, we are reaching a tipping point. We are fed up.

What happened to Sarah Everard is something every woman lives in fear of. We are told from a young age: "Wear bright clothes"; "Walk down well-lit streets, keys in your hand"; "Don't listen to music"; "Text us when you are home", etc., etc.

This is no way to live. It shouldn't be necessary. And we mustn't accept it. Women are tired of this. Enough is enough. This system is killing us.

We need to unite and fight to bring down this whole rotten, violent, oppressive system. We need revolutionary change to overthrow the capitalist system and its violent, oppressive state – and to build a socialist society, based upon genuine equality, dignity, and respect for human life.

By Lubna Badi, UEL Marxists

ORDER FROM CHAOS DO WE NEED LEADERSHIP?

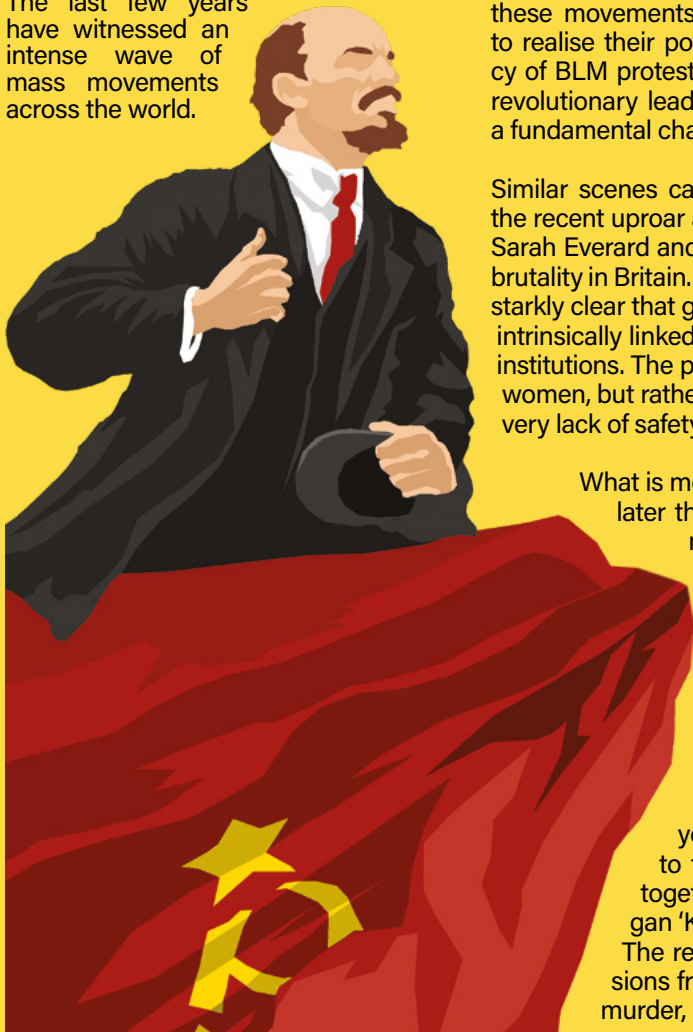
In the past few years, we have witnessed an explosion of mass movements across the globe. From the USA to India, Britain to Myanmar, revolutionary movements have flooded the streets.

Despite the buzz that comes with celebrating such movements, many have also been left wondering why they have all, eventually, petered out short of fundamental change? In other words, why haven't these movements kickstarted the world socialist revolution?

As Marxists, we must recognise that the answer to this lies in the crucial role of leadership. It is revolutionary leadership that can provide the working class with the direction and organisation to turn a mass movement into a socialist revolution.

SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENTS

The last few years have witnessed an intense wave of mass movements across the world.



Last June saw millions come together for the 'Black Lives Matter' protests, demanding an end to institutional racism. Starting in America after the horrific murder of George Floyd, this movement quickly spread to over 60 countries, touching all seven continents. Protestors raised a stern cry against the police, asserting that the police do not, and never will, serve us.

Though the mood was radical, with some calling for abolition of the police, the establishment worked to push liberal ideas into the protests, which would whitewash the movement and see it become impotent.

There was a revolutionary mood on these protests, which burned down a Minneapolis police station, with the support of 54% of US citizens. However, disoriented by the liberal and reformist ideas of a layer of their leaders, these movements are as yet unable to realise their potential. The militancy of BLM protesters, coupled with a revolutionary leadership, could make a fundamental change.

Similar scenes can be seen through the recent uproar around the death of Sarah Everard and subsequent police brutality in Britain. These events made starkly clear that gendered violence is intrinsically linked to the state and its institutions. The police do not protect women, but rather contribute to their very lack of safety.

What is more, only a few days later the Tory government managed to push their despotic Policing Bill through the Commons.

Incited with outrage at our fundamental freedom to protest being curtailed, workers and youth yet again took to the streets, coming together under the slogan 'Kill the Bill'.

The revolutionary conclusions from Sarah Everard's murder, and the radicalism

of the recent demos, needs a clear direction. The movement knows what it's against, but it must also state what it's for. We don't want compromises - we want a fundamental, revolutionary change that breaks with the capitalist system at the root of these evils. The need for a clear direction brings us back to the question of leadership.

REVOLUTIONARY PLAN

Lenin explained in relation to the October Revolution of 1917 that the working class succeeded in overthrowing the capitalists thanks to the Bolsheviks' unbending firmness on questions of Marxist theory, coupled with flexibility in tactics, and 'absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline'.

The success came from having a clear plan formulated with the method of Marxism, and connected with the working class movement. They were successful because they understood the pertinent need for the working class to take power into its own hands, and how this could be achieved.

Therefore an implacable revolutionary method is the only way to secure the victory of these mass movements!

Without leadership, such movements will continue to become sucked into the swamp of liberalism. This was shown with the BLM slogan being plastered over corporate billboards for companies which exploit workers worldwide. These liberal and reformist ideas will not fundamentally change the material conditions of the masses.

Rather, they divert these movements into safe channels, leaving the issues which sparked them unresolved. As socialists, it is our duty to make sure this does not occur.

We must work, guided by Marxist theory, to achieve an end to all oppression and exploitation. To do this we must arm the working class with the tools, knowledge, and leadership required to overthrow the rotten capitalist system.

By **Gemma Deacon**

MYTHS OF MARXISM

IS SOCIALISM UNDEMOCRATIC?

Socialism is often portrayed in capitalist societies as the antithesis of democracy.

However, this is a myth, which is used by the ruling class to deter workers and youth from learning about the reality of socialism. Socialism and workers' democracy are not only compatible but need each other.

You cannot have genuine socialism without workers' democracy. And you cannot have genuine workers' democracy without socialism.

SO-CALLED SOCIALISM

Looking at the self proclaimed 'communist' states, it is easy to see how this myth became so widely accepted.

The October Revolution in Russia started strong, bringing real democracy to workers in the form of the Soviets (workers councils). But after the death of Lenin, an enormous bureaucracy - with Stalin at its head - took more and more control.

Those who opposed this move away from workers' democracy, and the genuine programme of socialism, were expelled from the CP and often killed. Many, such as Trotsky, were accused of being counter-revolutionaries. The political and organisational debates which had been a key feature of the Bolsheviks were stifled.

The Stalinist USSR was not democratic, but it also was not socialist. Workers' democra-

cy was gradually weakened, as unelected bureaucrats began to dominate the economy and politics.

Though the USSR was not capitalist, it also did not practice socialism. To suggest that the totalitarianism of the USSR post-Lenin is a natural symptom of socialism is ignorant at best, and deceitful at worst.

CAPITALISM AND DEMOCRACY

When this argument is made, it is often contrasted with the so-called 'democratic' nature of capitalism. The most basic principle of capitalism, private ownership, proves this is false. Workplaces are not run by workers, but a capitalist who often knows nothing of the situation in the workplace.

The views of workers are rarely taken into account. Strike action is required to achieve any change. Outside the workplace, the majority has no power over what is produced, or the prices things are sold at. And we are unable to hold companies to account for their actions.

So the capitalist economy is lacking any real democracy. But what about in politics?

The capitalist class holds immense power over politics. With immense wealth, comes the ability to fund and corrupt political parties. The media is owned and controlled by a handful of billionaires, who churn out capitalist propaganda.

Both the economy and political systems under capitalism are

dominated by a wealthy minority which holds the real power in society. This, by any definition, is completely undemocratic. It is a 'democracy' for only the rich and privileged.

REAL DEMOCRACY

So what would workplace democracy look like? The best place to look for answers is the Soviets. Despite the conditions which soviet democracy was created in - backwards Russia - they still achieved a great step forwards. A revolution now could create a great deal more for workers.

The Soviets were not created by the Bolsheviks, or any political party, but by the workers themselves. In the course of the revolution, delegates were elected from every factory to discuss which way forward. With the victory of the October revolution - the Soviets were then given the power to carry out these ideas in practice.

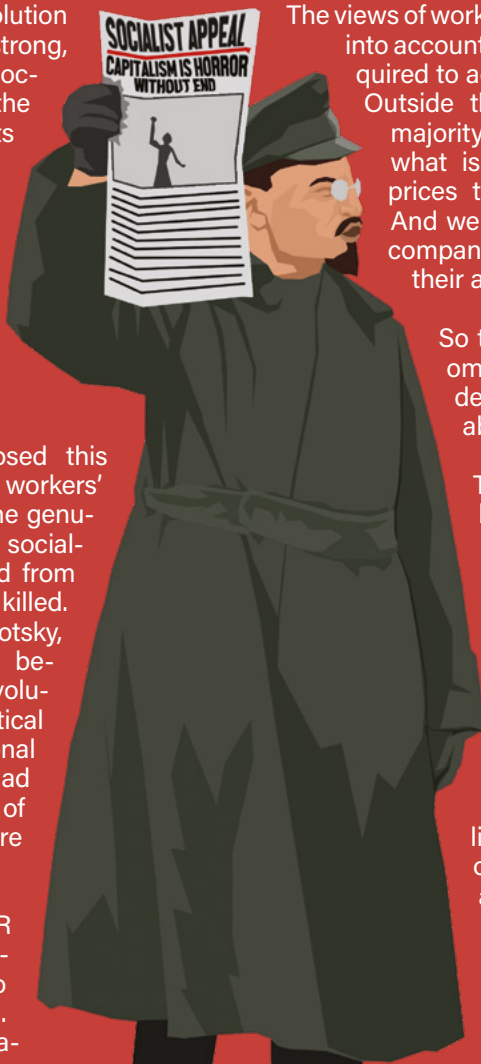
This showed a pure expression of the workers' desire for revolutionary change. This has been seen in revolutionary movements since in embryonic form.

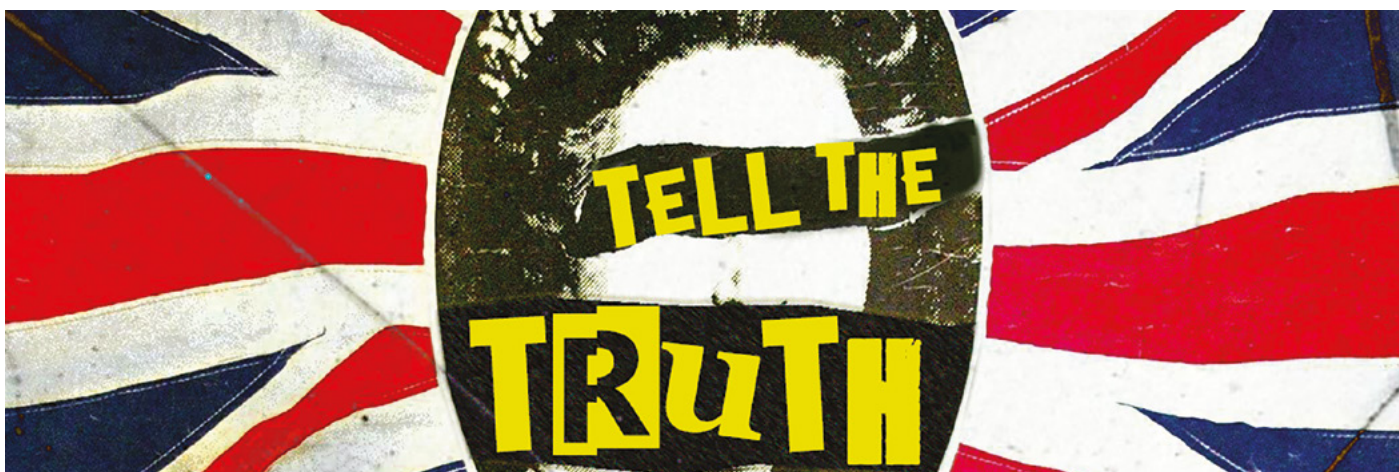
Worker's democracy is the only means of ensuring that workers can actually take control of their lives. From electing representatives - on a worker's wage and directly accountable to the workers themselves - in the workplaces; to the freeing of time for workers to participate in decisions at large; it is only in these conditions that real democracy can flourish.

Trotsky once commented that socialism without democracy is like a body without oxygen. In this we see that the two are fundamentally linked.

If the interests of workers are to be truly represented in society, then there must be a socialist revolution that puts the running of society in the hands of the working class, for the working class. Only this will end the tyranny of capitalism, and bring about a new, truly democratic world.

By **Finlay Stevenson**





THE MONARCHY DEFENDS THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

On Friday 10th April, the BBC announced the death of Prince Phillip at the age of 99. No doubt the Duke's death will be used to promote and celebrate British nationalism, flag-waving, and the institutions of pomp and privilege.

It will be used to promote the Royal Family as an essential cornerstone of the 'British way of life'.

The Monarchy, however, is not some privileged, pampered, holy-of-holies. It is a relic that has been left over from the days of feudalism, representing the interests of the powerful landowning classes.

Abolished by the English Revolution in the 17th century, the Monarchy was restored and became a useful tool for the new merchant and bourgeois class.

Although disliked and disparaged by the masses until quite recently, in modern times the British Monarchy was given a 'make-over' and anointed with a mystical gloss. Standing above politics, it was to become a key component in the preservation of capitalism.

Millions of pounds of public funds are spent on the upkeep of the Royal Family. This is not to maintain the Monarchy as a tourist attraction or an historic novelty, but for far more serious reasons.

The Monarchy is deliberately built up in the public mind as the pinnacle of the nation and the defender of the faith.

The armed forces swear allegiance, not to Parliament, but to the Monarch. The Prime Minister is appointed by the Monarch, as head of her government.

The opposition in Parliament is referred to as 'Her Majesty's Oppo-

sition'. The Queen (or King) has the power to appoint and dismiss governments and dissolve Parliament.

The Monarch has enormous reserve powers under the British constitution, which is unwritten. These powers are deliberately kept in the shadows in 'normal' times, hidden from public scrutiny.

This weapon is held precisely in reserve. It is only to be used in times of great crisis, where the capitalist system is under threat.

These hidden powers would, for example, be deployed by the establishment to block a left Labour government, if it threatened their class interests.

The full force of the constitution would be used – backed up by the law courts and the Privy Council – to destabilise a left-wing government.

The powers of the Crown would be brought into play to dismiss the elected government for the sake of 'national security'.

No doubt, the death of the Duke of Edinburgh will be used by the establishment to eulogise the Monarchy, praise "its extraordinary public service", and white-wash this feudal institution.

This is ironic, given Prince Philip's notoriety for racist jokes and comments. It is public knowledge. It was well-rehearsed bigotry.

But these were excused by fawning journalists as mere 'gaffes', to be brushed under the carpet. Is it therefore surprising that racism surfaced in the Royal household over Meghan's baby? Unlike the 'patriotic' Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, socialists should argue for the complete abolition of the Monarchy, which is a feudal relic and a dangerous reserve weapon of the ruling class.

Apparently, Starmer was named after Keir Hardie, the founder of the Labour Party. But, unlike Starmer, Hardie was no Royalist.

As a member of Parliament, in February 1893, Hardie opposed the address to the throne, instead moving an amendment demanding that the government pay attention to the condition of the unemployed. This provoked indignation from the Tories and Liberals.

By contrast, we now have the sickening spectacle of 'Sir' Starmer – a knight of the realm – bowing down before the capitalist establishment.

The Labour Party, under Starmer, announced today that it would be suspending election campaigning, "out of respect" for the Monarchy.

If the party was worth its salt, it would stand by the principles of Keir Hardie in this matter, and call for the abolition of the Monarchy, the House of Lords, and all the other feudal relics of the British establishment.

We say:

Away with class privileges, pomp, and class distinctions!

Down with the Monarchy! Down with the capitalist system!

For a socialist system that abolishes inequality!

Fight for a society run in the interests of the majority, not these privileged parasites!

By Rob Sewell

TELL THE TRUTH



PIMLICO ACADEMY IS RUN BY RACISTS FOR PROFIT

At the end of last month, on Wednesday 31 March, hundreds of students at Pimlico Academy in London held a sit-down protest on school grounds.

This demonstration has been presented in the mainstream media as a response to a change in the school's uniform policy. But a closer look shows a deeper rooted political battle taking place at the academy. The recent protest was the culmination of this struggle.

The protest happened on the back of countless changes, revealing quite clearly the outlook of the school's leadership. Recognition of the Black Lives Matter movement and Black History Month had been scrapped from the curriculum.

On top of that, the Union Jack flag had been introduced to the hallways and outside the school. This took place with no consultation of staff and students at the school, as all those who voiced disagreement were ignored.

Not only has teaching on oppression been removed, but a larger focus has been placed on the British monarchy.

As Marxists, we would be happy to see the truth about the monarchy taught in our classrooms. But as we've explained elsewhere, it's unlikely to be taught from a critical viewpoint in our schools.

Our education system is presented as simply a means to help facilitate the growth of students to form their own opinions. But these actions show that education under capitalism is far from neutral.

They show in no uncertain terms that the British education system stands in favour of the established order.

Part of the changes imposed by the school management included new uniform policies that directly targeted black and muslim students. These additional rules restricted hair-styles that "block the view of others", implying afros and natural black hair.

The rules also banned hijabs that are deemed to be "too colourful". A petition against these rules was swiftly started, and quickly reached over 1,000 signatures.

In response to all these reactionary changes, hundreds of students took action against the new measures, with a sit-down protest in the school grounds. Students carried placards saying "Black Lives Matter".

Graffiti was added to school walls and areas outside of the school grounds, that labelled the school as racist and called for the head teacher to be sacked. Slogans were featured such as 'Ain't no black in the union jack...' and 'Pimlico Academy run by racists...for profit'.

This protest demonstrates how politicised young people have become. It all goes to show that students are no longer willing to passively accept ideas which do not correspond to the reality of oppression and exploitation that they experience in their lives. We can also see that students are prepared to take matters into their own hands, to demand an end to the rotten status quo.

For young people, there is a growing understanding that things do not need to stay like this. This leaves the establishment in a dangerous position. In trying to clamp down on this mood they end up adding more fuel to the flames.

So angry were some students against the new school changes, that they removed and subsequently

burned the Union Jack that had been placed outside the school. This doesn't leave much room for speculation about the opinions held by these students on 'patriotism'.

Thirty members of staff are due to leave by the end of the school year, as they no longer feel comfortable working in this environment. This shows how detached the new school leadership has become from students and staff.

The restructuring of the history course - to replace the tiny amount of education on minority groups with further propaganda on the British monarchy - is reflective of the flag waving 'culture war' the Tories are trying to promote.

The reality is that if people really knew the true history of the British Empire - and the monarchy at its head - they would not line up in support of it.

The youth are clearly demonstrating this fact! If there was no threat to the establishment, there would be no reason for suppression. The students at Pimlico College won their battle, with the college agreeing to all of their demands. The lesson here is that militancy pays.

However, this is not the end of the struggle against oppression. In fact, students who joined the fight are being threatened with expulsion. We must fight against this disgusting clamp down on protest!

The establishment is frightened of what is to come. And so they should be! Students and workers must unite in militant action against all oppression and exploitation. Pimlico College students have shown the way forward.

By **Mavi Atilgan**

JOIN US!

MEET THE MARXISTS

Come along and meet the Marxists in socially distanced outdoor meetings over the spring! Across the country our Marxist Societies will be hosting a series of meetings discussing the myths of Marxism.

Lots of lies and slanders exist about Marxism. This is because Marxism threatens the ruling class and aims to destroy capitalism forever. Our comrades will be delivering short explanations of the incorrect nature of these myths and why an end to capitalism is necessary! We will discuss these four topics:

- 1. DO WE NEED A REVOLUTION?**
- 2. IS THIS A CRISIS OF CAPITALISM OR CORONAVIRUS?**
- 3. WOULD COMMUNISM STIFLE INDIVIDUALITY?**
- 4. IS AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVOLUTION REALISTIC?**

Over the month we will advertise where these meetings will be held in various places. Check out the page on our website to find out more! See you there comrades!



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