

REVOLUTION

MARXISTSTUDENT.COM

ISSUE 15

YOUTH IN



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REVOLT



WHY WE FIGHT



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

We have comrades and Marxist societies in nearly 40 universities and over 20 schools and colleges. 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 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 MEETING THE **OXFORD MARXISTS**

The Oxford Marxist society held four public meetings in May as a part of the Marxist Student Federation's nationwide "Marxism in the Park" campaign, covering the following introductory topics: "Do we need a revolution?" ; "Is this coronavirus or the crisis of capitalism?" ; "Does communism stop individuality?" ; "Is an international socialist revolution realistic?" They were meant to serve as basic, but powerful introductions to the ideas of Marxism, and marked the long-awaited return to in-person activity for the first time in months.

Each meeting started with a short speech outlining the theme of the meeting by one of our comrades, after which a lively discussion with contributions from the attendees and other comrades followed. We discussed a wide range of issues, including the process of transition of power, the ways of building a strong

organisation and how capitalism suppresses human creativity, contrary to popular belief.

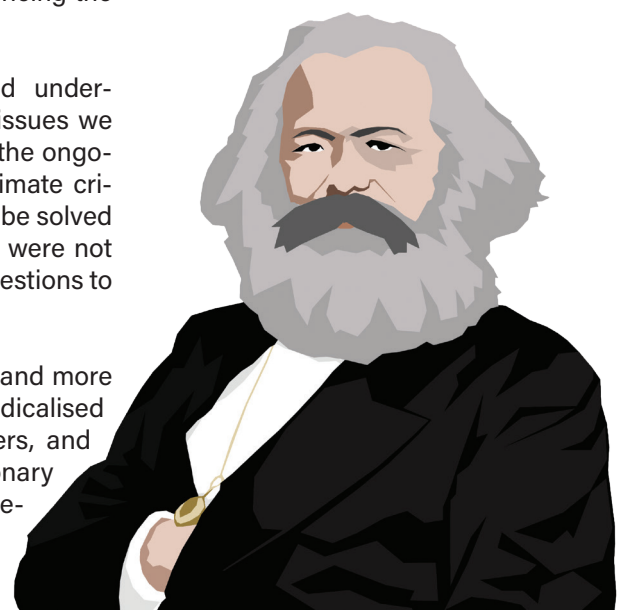
We had good attendance throughout the series. The meetings attracted school students and people who recently became interested in the ideas of Marxism after experiencing the ongoing crises first-hand.

They already had a good understanding that none of the issues we have to deal with today — the ongoing economic crisis, the climate crisis, or the pandemic — can be solved under capitalism, and they were not scared of asking difficult questions to find out more.

This only shows that more and more youth are getting rapidly radicalised and are looking for answers, and the hunger for revolutionary theory is bigger than ever be-

fore. This is not surprising at all, considering that the majority of young people today have never experienced life outside of capitalist crisis! Marxism is the only thing able to provide a way forward and a better future!

By Oxford Marxists



YOUTH

IN

REVOLT!

As a new wave of students prepare for university and life after school, they are bound to be conscious of the turbulent times through which they live. Although restrictions have been eased, the threat of COVID is far from gone, and likely to stay part of our lives for years to come.

The Tories have rushed to try and get things back to 'normal'. The truth is there is no such thing. The current crisis is not just one of health but of economics, politics, the environment, and the system as a whole. It is greater than any seen before in capitalism's history. Back to 'normal' will involve shifting the brunt of the crisis onto the shoulders of working class and young people.

As young people we have already faced a year of school closures, rushed re-openings, and desperate mismanagement of exams. And the disruption to our lives is only set to continue. Covid might not be the biggest threat any more, but with no prospect of economic growth, and debt levels becoming un-

sustainable, we face cuts to education, high unemployment, and low wages.

Taken all together we face a pandemic, climate change, rising debts, and capitalist slump. What kind of future does this hold for us?

In Britain, those under the age of 35 accounted for almost 80 per cent of jobs lost in the past year. So those looking to head straight into the job market are also facing bleak prospects.

Students leaving secondary school this year are doing so in one the most politically charged periods in recent history.

Long gone are the days when the youth could be accused of apathy towards politics. Now, the ruling class spends its time trying to distract the youth from radical politics.

Just last year the teaching of 'anti-capitalist' material was banned in schools. For the government to take such measures, while our schools face serious underfunding and shortages, shows exactly where their priorities lie.

But this generation is learning through struggle. The climate strikes of 2019 were a formative experience that will be built on.

When teachers attempted to ban colourful hijabs and afro hair, whilst displaying Union Jacks in Pimlico Academy, London, students organised a sit-down protest on school grounds.

The demonstration was presented in the mainstream media as a response to a change in the school's uniform policy. But a closer look showed a deeper rooted political battle taking place. The school was banning recognition of the Black Lives Matter movement and Black History Month. And the students weren't taking it lying down.

The fightback at Pimlico is an embryo of the fightback we will see over the next few years. Not just in the UK, but across the world, young people are at the forefront of mass movements. We saw this in Peru and Colombia.

Everywhere our future is being sacrificed for the wealth and profits of a handful of people. The anger that exists among young people in other countries exists here too, and we need to prepare to get stuck in when the movement picks up.

The problems we're facing now aren't the product of individual greed or incompetence from bosses or politicians. The problem is a system that puts profit before need. This is how the capitalist system works and we are seeing its results now, from low wages, to environmental catastrophe, to education cuts, to racism.

We want a real future, and we're ready to fight for it. We're against capitalism and for socialism, which is a system that puts need before profit.

We need to take these ideas into schools, colleges, universities and workplaces, and win over as many people as possible.

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD JOIN A TRADE UNION

Right now, the working class is under attack. The COVID pandemic has seen bosses ride roughshod over health concerns of workers. The scourge of 'fire and rehire', a tactic that sees entire workforces fired and rehired on worse conditions continues to spread. Wages are at an all time low, and the Tories are gearing up for a new round of austerity. This simply cannot go on.

What a union should do

Trade unions exist to protect workers. Of course, long term protection of workers can only come from an end to capitalism. However, to get to this point we need strong and decisive class struggle, and that is linked to the strength of the unions themselves.

Strike action is a decisive tool in this battle. The Bakers Food and Allied Workers union, which organises workers in McDonald's, organised a strike over low pay in two branches in Cambridge, which gained the highest pay rise in ten years.

Many of those who organised the strike were new, young workers who through militant action showed the power a union can wield. There are countless examples we can draw on to show the success of strike action. The labour movement, and the working class has learnt through history that this is how to fight back.

DVLA workers (in the PCS union), recently went on strike to protest the agency's lack of covid measures. Metroline workers (Unite the Union), whose mere threat of strike action over tactics that

would see workers' pay cut, led to a backing down by the company.

The simple fact is that the class struggle improves the lives of workers in the here and now. In 2020 union members made 4% more than their non-union counterparts. Furthermore, employees of workplaces with a strong union presence tend to work fewer hours than their non-union counterparts.

From the mighty miners strike of 1984, to Metroline bus workers today, the unions have formed an integral part of the class struggle and advancement of workers rights. However, the last 2 decades have been marked by a drop in union membership. This is especially true for young workers, who make up a small proportion of union members. For example, in UNISON, a union of 1.3 million workers, there are only 63,000 young workers. Given the scale of attack on the working class today, we must help transform the unions into a powerful fighting force.

How young people can have an influence

The point of a union is not just defensive, i.e. the protection of workers rights. Unions also play a huge role in advancing the class struggle. In Britain, unions have held a powerful position in the Labour Party since its inception, and can use their placement to promote class politics on the political plane as well as the industrial. Mass involvement in unions, with militant leadership can help lead to a fighting Labour Party which discusses real workers issues.

The fight for a socialist future for all young people begins with organisations built by and for the working class. But the success and strength of those organisations is dependent on the membership and involvement of as many young workers as possible.

With strong trade unions that have a bold, fighting leadership we can organise the fight not just in the workplace but the class war itself. Trade unions with a strong youth presence will ensure a better life for the young workers of today and, if the fight is carried out to the fullest, for the young workers of tomorrow.

As young workers, we must join a union and involve ourselves in the fight for socialism, by building socialist ideas in every part of the Labour movement.

By **Alfie McNicol**



Ian Hodson, President of the Bakers Union

MYTHS OF MARXISM: THE BLACK BOOK OF COMMUNISM

In 1999 the infamous **Black Book of Communism** was published. It was immediately met with glee by the bourgeois press as a shining expose of the evils of socialism. It boiled the communist movement down to a simple formula of “**Leninism = Terror**”, punctuating it with an end of the century death score of wildly inflated figures.

Despite many of the contributors to the **Black Book** publicly disowning the piece as “sloppy and biased scholarship,” the book remains a source of mystification about the true content of Leninism, and the economic and political realities of the USSR that created the conditions that allowed Stalin’s rise. It also serves to dampen the imagination of working-class people today who are sick of watching the world decay and are desperate for an alternative.

Stalinism or Bolshevism

In exaggerating the crimes of Stalin to demonic proportions, the bourgeois academics and media seek to conflate genuine Marxism and Stalinism. They hope that by tying the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx to the atrocities of Stalin, who was the butcher of the historical communist movement, the working class can be persuaded to abandon struggle and remain placidly shackled to the sinking ship of the capitalist system.

However, in the words of the French poet Victor Hugo, “no army can stop an idea whose time has come”. Marx’s vision of a liberated working-class has found new life today in the minds of young peo-

ple, who have seen their futures collapse in front of them. Crisis breeds radicalism and capitalism breeds crisis – there is nothing that the bourgeoisie can do to stop this phenomenon.

The bourgeois class has an incentive to slander any attempt at achieving a world beyond the capitalist system. Their interests, their profits, and their place at the peak of society is dependent on capitalism.

They will lie and spit and gnash their teeth at any sign of life in the labour movement, reacting viciously and without remorse at the mere suggestion that capitalism has passed its expiration date.

Bourgeois hypocrisy

It is worth considering the reality of capitalism when we combat the fictions spun to discredit socialism. Since the time of the Russian Revolution, capitalist institutions have soared to murderous heights never before seen in human history. With 158 million deaths attributed to imperialist wars alone, the stench of capitalism far exceeds that attributed to the rotten corpse of Stalinism. Of those 158 million, approximately 56 million of those deaths can be directly attributed to ‘liberal democratic’ states – the humane masks that these regimes wear do not require much effort to lift away.

The unprecedented scope of violence that capitalism has inflicted on humanity is even further magnified when considering the brutality of colonialism, institutionalised poverty, starvation and the

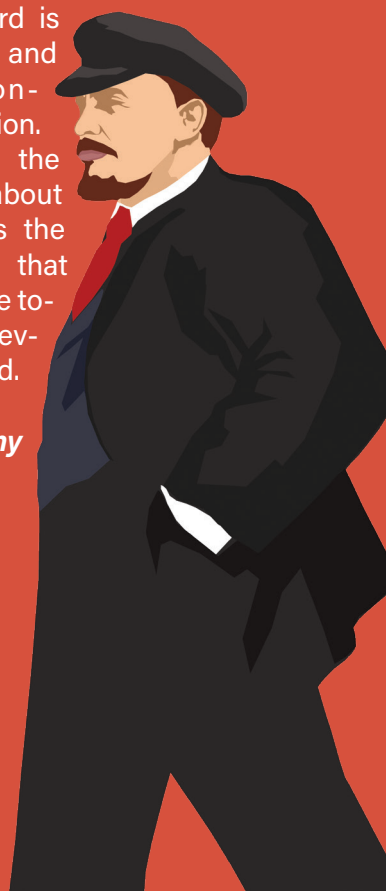
numerous campaigns of genocide that have murdered hundreds of millions of innocent people in the colonised world. As Marx said, ‘If money comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek... capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt!’

Red Scare

The fictions of the **Black Book of Communism** have re-entered into debates about socialism and capitalism precisely because the ideas of socialism and Marxism can no longer be ignored. The bourgeoisie is searching for a means to stifle the tide of working-class struggle. But young workers and students have spent their entire lives immersed in the deepest crises that the capitalist system has ever experienced – and they are desperate for a way forward and out of this mess.

There can be no mistake. The only way forward is socialism and international revolution. Dispelling the myths about Marxism is the first step that we can take towards achieving that end.

By **Donny Bleakley**



RACIST ABUSE OF ENGLAND PLAYERS: KICK CAPITALISM OUT OF FOOTBALL!

The disgusting abuse suffered by Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka following the final of the Euros has brought the spotlight onto football's failure to eradicate racism.

Despite claims that this is proof that working class fans are in some way 'inherently racist', this abuse really shows that even football is not immune from capitalism's influence.

Capitalism's role in football

Few football fans will have not noticed the role of capitalism at the top levels of football. Extortionate ticket prices, overpriced football shirts and other merchandise, and the constant bombardment of advertising (in many cases by gambling companies) by giant corporations are common at the biggest matches. For the actual match in question, tickets cost a minimum of £250, even in the cheapest category!

Neither is capitalism's influence in football a new phenomenon. Many feel that the real commercialisation began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, although it has its roots much earlier. This did not happen by accident nor was it a 'mistake', but the reality of capitalism's need to find new avenues to profit in every aspect of society.

Racism in football also has a significant history. From the role of the far-right National Front in numerous hooligan firms in the 70s and 80s, to the infamous picture of John Barnes having a banana thrown at him during a game, right through to events over recent years such as Chelsea fans pushing a black person off a train while proudly chanting about being racist, racism has often expressed itself in football. Understanding the reason for this cannot be done in isolation, but requires analysis of the role of capitalism in racism.

Racism in capitalist society

Racism is used as a "divide and rule" tactic by the ruling class. It can pit one section of the working class against another, while deflecting away from the real enemies of all working class people. No better examples of this exist than the recent attempt by the Tory government to stir-up 'culture wars' By trying to whip-up the most backwards layers against the BLM movement and creating hysteria about "cultural Marxism", they deflect attention away from their catastrophic handling of the pandemic and the upcoming crisis facing working class people.

How this will manifest itself in football is obvious. A small minority of fans at

some games this season, and then the opening few England games at the Euros, booed the taking of the knee by players before the game in solidarity with the BLM movement. Boris Johnson and Priti Patel both refused to condemn the booing, stating that taking the knee was a "political act" and "gesture politics". The ruling class always needs a scapegoat that is not itself, and with football being such an important interest for many sections of the working class, the poison of racism in wider society will inherently spill over into the sport.

Kick capitalism out of football!

The true feelings of the overwhelming majority of football fans have been shown over recent weeks. Large support exists for proposals to prevent those guilty of online racist abuse from attending matches. Once news broke of a mural dedicated to Marcus Rashford being vandalised, hundreds of working class people attended to cover up the graffiti.

Although any attempts to prevent racists from attending games would be welcomed, racism ultimately cannot be removed from football until capitalism is. Racism will only be defeated by the struggle of working class fans of all races, and by the wider removal of its breeding ground of misery, which the capitalist system creates.

By **Len Scott**



RAPE CULTURE IN SCHOOLS: PRODUCT OF A SICK SYSTEM

From 'rape-lists' to 'body counts' and revenge-porn group-chats: revelations from the 'Everyone's Invited' website - which provides a platform for people to submit anonymous experiences of sexual abuse and violence within schools and colleges - makes for harrowing reading.

The website has received nearly 15,000 responses from students, helping bring to light the endemic rape culture within educational institutions across the UK - particularly acute in private schools.

Sick

One pupil accused the independent school Hampton Boys of perpetuating such a culture. "Boys have saved pictures I post," the student revealed, "and have re-posted them in their group chats, making crude and disgusting comments."

According to another post, boys at King's College, Wimbledon, have "a game during the summer about how many girls they could show their dicks to...it was some sort of sick competition".

Another stated that there "would always be a competition of how many 'yats' they had got with or slept with - many of these girls being drunk and taken advantage of".

Another student revealed: "You would be entirely correct in saying St Paul's boys' school is integrally built upon the unadulterated wish for boys to show their sexual prowess through rape and assault. I recall their age old 'theme tune' sung at rugby games including the lyrics: 'I'm St. Paul's till I die...fuck her sleeping, fuck her dying, if she had wings I'd fuck her flying'."

Capitalism and sexism

These reactionary ideas are a product of the capitalist system, which relies on sexism and racism in order to divide and exploit the working class.

Under capitalism, women are treated as a secondary, exploitable labour force - the first to be sacked in the time of crisis; and relied upon to carry out the bulk of domestic labour in the home.

On top of this, capitalism promotes sexism through the objectification and commodification of women's bodies, for the sake of the bosses' profit. This occurs through the capitalist media and through advertising, as well as the porn industry.

All of this is actively fed and fuelled by the ruling class, in order to divide the working class, making both women and men more vulnerable to the exploitation of the capitalists.

In effect, women are relegated to the position of second-class citizens: degraded, objectified, oppressed, and exploited. And this creates the fertile ground upon which sexist ideas - and sexual violence - flourish within wider society.

Tackle the roots

It is important for schools to teach pupils the importance of consent and respect. But this will do little to mitigate sexism in a system that thrives off the oppression of women.

A few petty reforms have been proposed by the establishment in an attempt to create the pretence of action.

But Ofsted investigations into private schools will have little-to-no impact on the issue. And given their sordid history, we can be forgiven for having little confidence in the police to take allegations of sexual offences seriously.

Similarly, the whole criminal justice system has demonstrated an historic inability to tackle sexual violence.

At the end of the day, these reforms present schools as isolated institutions where sexist culture can be 'fixed' internally. They fail to recognise that the schools - and the whole education system - are

a reflection of wider society, shaped by capitalism and the interests of the ruling class.

Revolution and liberation

Marxists will fight for any real improvement in the lives of working women. But ultimately, the only way to fully tackle the question of sexism and women's oppression is by overthrowing the system that breeds this sexism and oppression.

Women will never be viewed as equals within a society built upon inequality and injustice. Neither women nor men will ever have control over their lives and bodies within an economy based on exploitation, profit, and competition, and commodification. And we will never rid the world of misogyny, as long as the capitalist class are in control, using sexism and bigotry to divide the working class.

In other words, to end sexism and all forms of oppression, we need to overthrow capitalism - we need a revolution.

The choice is clear: socialism or barbarism!

By Rishi Millward-Bose





The situation in Cuba is serious.

Under the embargo restrictions, Cuba suffers food and medicine shortages, and economic hardship. The economic situation, aggravated by Trump's tightening of the blockade as well as the impact of the pandemic in a tourist-dependent country, led to protests on July 11, which started in San Antonio de los Baños (near Havana, Cuba's capital) and then spread to other towns and cities.

There is a genuine component to protests that has grown out of real hardship facing the people. US imperialism is attempting to portray the protests as a mass anti-communist or pro-capitalist uprising. By orchestrating a social media frenzy and spreading false information, the agents of imperialism have thrown up a lot of dust around the protests in Cuba.

Those trying to hijack the legitimate anger of the Cuban masses are demanding humanitarian intervention in Cuba to 'help Cubans.' But where were the calls for interventions in Brazil or Peru, two countries with much higher COVID mortality rates than Cuba? This demand has nothing to do with the welfare of the Cuban workers, and everything to do with undermining the gains of the revolution.

A large layer of the Cuban workers understand this and have mobilised against the counter-revolution. All across Cuba, thousands take to the streets in defence of so-

cialism and the Cuban revolution. Of course, the Western pro-capitalist media is unwilling to report that!

The people of Cuba are facing genuine hardships. The economic impact of the blockade is exacerbated by the bureaucratic planning of the economy and aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. But an intervention in Cuba by the imperialist powers is no solution. One of the main reasons for the Cuban revolution of 1959, led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, was for the country to gain national liberation from US imperialism.

Washington cannot stand a revolution which stood up to imperialism 90 miles from the US shore. US imperialism desires the return of the easy profits it enjoyed under Batista's military regime. This would not bring stability and prosperity for Cuban workers. It would bring exploitation and misery as US profits are extracted at their expense.

After the 1959 revolution, Cuba was able to boost literacy rates to 100%, the highest in South America. It eliminated mother-to-child HIV transmission (a world first), eradicated homelessness and guaranteed free education for all up to and including university, as well as a universal health system which compares favourably with those of advanced capitalist countries.

All of this was achieved because of the abolition of capitalism and in spite of the imperialist blockade, the isolation of the revolution in a small island and the bureaucratic regime. Cuba's system of economic planning must be

defended, despite its flaws. A return to capitalism would spell disaster for Cuba: poverty and unemployment would run rampant.

As internationalists, we understand that the fight for socialism must be fought on a global scale. We therefore stand in solidarity with the Cuban revolution against imperialism, and against the restoration of capitalism. We must also point out that the present bureaucratic regime in Cuba is an enormous weakness in the defences of the revolution. We are opposed to bureaucracy and stand for workers' democracy and workers' control. We must defend the Cuban revolution unconditionally, but not uncritically.

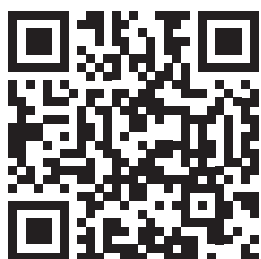
The lack of workers' democracy in Cuba negatively affects economic planning. This, combined with the blockade, makes the present situation in Cuba unsustainable. Bit by bit, the Cuban government is opening up to capitalism following the model of China and Vietnam. These concessions are gradually undermining the revolution. The Cuban workers must stand for a revolutionary, internationalist perspective. This way they can sweep away the bureaucracy, safeguard the revolution, and be a beacon of hope and an example to follow for workers all over the world straining for a way out of this rotten capitalist system.

**Defend the Cuban revolution!
US imperialism, hands off Cuba!
For workers' democracy and socialism in Cuba!**

By **Ed Blake**

Join the Marxists,
fight for Revolution!

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