

# workers power

Supplement  
1 August 2024

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## STOP FAR RIGHT TERROR WITH WORKERS' SELF DEFENCE

A FEW hours after a vigil on 30 July held for the families of a murderous knife attack on children in Southport, Merseyside, a mob of far right thugs descended on the town. They went to attack a local mosque with a hail of stones and bricks, chanting slogans, 'No Surrender' and 'England till I die'.

The seaside town was already reeling from the shock of the murder of three young girls and serious injuries to eight other children and two adults in an attack by a teenager from the nearby village of Banks.

But instead of being allowed time to grieve and focus on messages of support, the families had to deal with the mayhem of race hate-mongers in their town.

Far right activists took to social media spreading Islamophobic lies in an attempt to whip up a racist mob—and succeeded. They claimed, wrongly, that the attacker was called Ali Al-Shakati and that he had arrived in the UK via a small boat crossing in 2023. Tate, who is currently facing charges in Romania of rape and sex trafficking, called on people to 'wake up' to the threat posed by 'illegal migrants'.

Robinson claimed the 'authorities' were trying to 'manipulate' the public by repressing details of the attacker. Nigel Farage, Reform UK MP for Clacton, cashed in on the disinformation, posting, 'I just wonder whether the truth is being withheld from us', linking the incident to last week's killing of a soldier; 'Our country is being destroyed, our values trashed and the public on the point of revolt.'

Robinson ally Daniel Thomas led the call to descend on Southport: 'Every city has to go up. Get prepared. Be ready. We have to. It has to go off in different cities. We have to show them we've had enough.' Ominously this call was heeded in London, Manchester, Hartlepool and elsewhere the following night.

After the riot, Robinson was quick to defend the racist mob: 'Before anyone starts condemning the angry English men up in Southport, ask yourselves this, what do you fucking expect them to do. Don't call them hooligans, they're justified in their anger.'

When Farage's comments were criticised in the media, Robinson went to his defence, saying 'I told you, it's me today and you tomorrow. These false accusations against you are what I have faced for well over a decade.'

### RISE OF THE RIGHT

This is not a one-off incident. Robinson and Mark Collett,

leader of the overtly fascist Patriotic Alliance, have both been convicted of spreading fake news, pinning the blame for atrocities on Muslims. On Saturday 27 July, just three days earlier, over 30,000 racists, including a not very concealed fascist core, marched through London.

There they heard Robinson claim, 'Enough is enough, a line in the sand has been drawn. We're being replaced no longer,' in a reference to the 'Great Displacement Theory', a well-known fascist meme that white Christian culture is being eroded by Muslim migrants (in fact just 6% of Britons are Muslim).

Robinson and Co.'s aim is to enrage people against all Muslims (and anyone of colour who looks as though they might be) and create a mass movement of street brawlers, while shifting the narrative on migration further to the right. No wonder they appear so gleeful at the riot they brought off on Tuesday.

At the same demonstration, everyone raised their hand when asked who voted for Reform, the former Brexit party. This is the racist core of the entire Brexit campaign on open display. The fascist right are now exploiting Brexit's toxic combination of little-England chauvinism and overt racism to recruit and rebuild a street fighting movement. The difference between now and 2010, is that the racists have four million votes and MPs in parliament willing to amplify and legitimise their poison.

### THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The new Labour government is vulnerable. Indeed Keir Starmer was jeered when he made a fleeting visit to Southport after the murders. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has been walking a tightrope. Labour wants to placate Muslim voters who shunned Labour in the recent general election, while also satisfying those who abandoned Labour for Farage's Reform UK and are demanding 'tough action' against migrants.

On the one hand she has stopped all flights of deported asylum seekers to Rwanda and closed the detention barge Bibby Stockholm, a visible sore of the Tories' anti-migrant policy. On the other hand she has ordered a 'summer blitz of illegal immigration raids' in an attempt to signal that Labour will continue the essence of the Tory message that Britain is a 'hostile environment' for those seeking a safe future.

But the far left also clearly has much work to do. At the end of June Robinson, who was once the leader of the notorious English Defence League, brought 5,000 racists into central London. The SWP's Stand Up To Racism could only muster 300 to counter-demonstrate. A month later SUTR mobilised 5,000, an improvement but still far, far less than Robinson's 30,000 or

more.

At the same time the Trans+ Pride demo attracted tens of thousands, double the number of last year's, in large part due to the intensified attacks by the state on trans rights, but also swelled by more labour movement bodies and left activists.

Numbers are not irrelevant. The unions, who had over 50 branch and regional banners on the demo on Saturday, need to be forced to bring more of their members and officials onto the streets. For too long SUTR, like Stop the War, has rested content with receiving union financial backing without demanding action.

In every town and workplace, activists need to campaign against the far right, debunking their myths about migrants and calling on workmates to help stop them in their tracks.

But there are two more things we need to do. First, we have to demand that the Labour government draws its own line in the sand by declaring that all migrants and refugees are welcome here.

The working class in Britain has long been a multinational, multi-racial class with a strong tradition of anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigning. The Islamophobic targeting of Muslim communities under the pretext of the war on terror, and the criminalisation of refugees, both institutionalised under the New Labour government, created the conditions for a new generation of racists to exploit popular anger at unemployment and the destruction of jobs, public services and social housing.

Campaign groups and especially the unions need to demand Labour not only end the criminalisation of refugees, and so-called illegal immigrants, but also quickly moves to build the houses, fix the NHS and provide the jobs for everyone who lives here or wants to live here. Indeed this was the message Jeremy Corbyn sent to the anti-racist rally on Saturday.

Secondly, anti-fascist demonstrations must take on a mass character, and be protected by a self-defence organisation accountable to the local labour movement and communities. The need for organised self-defence will take on more importance if the fascists try to organise provocations

in multi-ethnic areas, because we can't rely on an institutionally racist police to protect us. This must start on Saturday's Palestine demo (3 August).

This is a task for rank and file trade unionists and anti-racist activists. Labour ministers will crack down on the organisers of far right violence, but continue to use dog whistle racism on immigration, in order to placate parts of the electorate who have fallen for the racist lies; union leaders will not go beyond words; the police are more likely to attack racial minorities, as in the recent incident in Manchester, and protect the far right's 'right' to demonstrate, than they are to close the fascists down.

Meanwhile we must resist any Labour move to ban the EDL or place further restrictions on protest, as these will be used against the antifascists when they have to defend their demos and communities.

But to succeed in this we have to go beyond the methods used by the Socialist Workers Party and their latest front, Stand Up to Racism, over decades, i.e. limiting the methods of resistance to what is acceptable to the trade union leaders, Labour MPs and liberal anti-racist organisations.

Against the development of a fascist street movement – which is clearly what we are facing after the co-ordinated riots after Southport –we need mass, militant mobilisations able to defend our communities and drive the fascists off the streets, physically if necessary and possible.

Against the rise of a far-right party willing to flirt with street violence to divide working class communities, we need to build a political alternative; one that names capitalism, and imperialism as the enemy of all working people—and the class struggle for socialism as the necessary solution. Otherwise, as Trotsky warned in the 1930s, the working class will pay for the inevitable betrayals of reformism with the rising menace of fascism.

- Down with racist attacks – far right off our streets
- For workers' self-defence against fascism
- No-one is illegal: free movement and equal rights for all

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

Behind the Tories and their billionaire backers lies the capitalist system. It is a system that puts millions on the dole, seeks to drive down wages and destroys the environment. It is a system that diverts attention from its crimes by bloody wars, and by dividing up the workers amongst themselves by promoting racism and sexism.

We want a socialist revolution to replace this system with one where production is guided by the needs of the many, not the profits of the few. That means taking the wealth of society, the banks and the major firms, into the hands of the working class and drawing up a democratic plan of production under workers' control.

To get this we have to break the resistance of the capitalist state: the police, courts, army and judiciary and replace it with a new kind of state based on democratically elected and accountable workers' councils.

The working class has the power to do this. It is rediscovering its potential to defeat the bosses through strike action. We think that power should be used to smash capitalism and build a new kind of society without poverty, oppression and war.

We fight for a working class unity and a revolutionary party based on a programme of action:

- A living wage, pension and social security for all, indexed to inflation.
- Controls on prices, rents and bills.
- Workers' control over all strikes and negotiations. For a rank and file movement to dissolve the bureaucracy and create fighting, democratic unions.
- Women's liberation: social provision of childcare and domestic labour. Abortion on demand; gender self-ID.
- No platform for fascists. A workers' self-defence guard to defend communities.
- Open borders: equal rights for all migrants and refugees from day one.
- No to war: Britain out of Nato. For national liberation against imperialism.
- A workers' government based on and accountable to councils of workers' delegates.
- Expropriate the fortunes of the rich to fund public services and a just transition.
- Nationalisation under workers' control of the major banks, transport, utilities, public services, manufacturing.
- A revolutionary party, united with socialists across the world in a new world party of socialist revolution—a Fifth International.



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