

# Mass protests against Trump's UK visit

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14 July 2018

The huge protests in London and elsewhere in the UK yesterday were an outpouring of anger and revulsion against US President Donald Trump.

Organisers estimated a quarter of a million flooded into Trafalgar Square and surrounding streets. Police admit over 100,000. Tens of thousands also protested in major cities such as Manchester, Sheffield and Glasgow.

This was the first opportunity for workers in Europe to express their own views on the US president, after a week he spent threatening the European powers with trade war and demanding they speed up their own ongoing rearmament.

And whereas Europe's rulers bemoaned their wounded pride at Trump's pointed insults while seeking to maintain working relations, the UK protests prove that millions upon millions of workers despise Trump and everything he stands for—the enrichment of the billionaires, gutting of welfare provision, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim racism and naked warmongering.

There is no doubt that Trump's trip to Europe played its part in galvanising yesterday's protests, including his xenophobic outburst in the *Sun* against immigrants and immigration destroying British and European culture.

Prime Minister Theresa May invited Trump to visit, despite more than a million people signing a petition in opposition. She hoped to secure his support for a US trade deal post-Brexit, promising the president at Blenheim Palace “an opportunity to tear down the bureaucratic barriers that frustrate business leaders on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Instead, in the pages of the *Sun* Trump treated her with naked scorn for daring to seek a continued relationship with the European Union, publicly savaging her just as he had German Chancellor Angela Merkel. All while his fascist attack dog, Steve Bannon,

organised meetings with far-right figures at his Mayfair hotel in furtherance of the EU's break-up.

But the nationwide protests gave only a very partial expression to the opposition that exists to Trump. He complained that he had been made to feel “unwelcome” in London. But had anyone called for strikes and boycotts of his visit, then Trump would have been sent packing.

No one made such a call—neither the trade unions, nor Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Corbyn spoke at Trafalgar Square, gave press interviews and made a video castigating Trump for his abuses of immigrants and attack on human rights. But he made sure to declare, “We are committed to dialogue, including of course with those we strongly disagree with and in government we would find a way to work with his administration while also standing up for our values.”

What does such a statement signify? That in office Labour would seek to work with Trump because he represents US imperialism. And as head of a government representing British imperialism, Corbyn would also maintain Britain's nuclear missiles and actively collude with the US and European imperialists within NATO.

The character of the political establishment's nominal opposition to Trump was spelt out in the *Guardian's* editorial. Supporting the protests, it contrasted Trump's trip with the very first visit by a US president to Europe, Woodrow Wilson, in the aftermath of World War I, “to make peace in war-ravaged Europe and to lead the construction of a liberal international order based on laws and rights.” But it did so without offering any explanation for Trump's rise to the presidency and to insist that the European powers continue to represent a shining beacon for these same values.

“Mr Trump's America can no longer be regarded

with certainty as a reliable ally for European nations committed to the defence of liberal democracy,” it declared, while columnist Jonathan Freedland insisted that Britons “need to decide where we stand on what is emerging as the defining global divide.” With the EU or “with the world of Putin, Viktor Orbán and Trump... in which you either screw or get screwed...”

There is a political gulf between such apologists for the British and European imperialist powers and the great mass of working people and youth. They have been subject to savage austerity by Europe’s governments and have seen them eviscerate democratic freedoms and collectively preside over the treatment of refugees every bit as brutal as Trump, while boasting of their own rearmament programmes and turn to militarism.

The stench of fascism hovering over Trump and his Mafia-like shakedown of May and other European leaders is not an issue of an aberrant personality. Rather, his boorishness and brutality is the embodiment of all the violent characteristics of American imperialism in the period of its decline.

Whether led by Trump and the Republicans, or Hilary Clinton and the Democrats, the US will stop at nothing to preserve global political, economic and military domination. Indeed, Trump’s ascent to power confirms the prescience of Leon Trotsky’s insistence that “In the period of crisis the hegemony of the United States will operate more completely, more openly, and more ruthlessly than in the period of boom.”

One hundred years ago, in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson came to Europe, holding aloft his “Fourteen Points” presenting himself and America as the savior of “democracy, universal brotherhood and peace.” There was no small element of deceit and hypocrisy in the pretensions of Wilson, but the ascent of American imperialism endowed the president’s proclamations with a certain credibility. Wilson, a former university president, was even able to articulate the ambitions of US imperialism with considerable eloquence.

But a century later, the grotesque figure of Trump lumbers across Europe, threatening one and all with “offers that can’t be refused.” The differences in appearance, culture, demeanor and language reflect different stages in the historical trajectory of American imperialism. Wilson represented the ascent of the United States. Trump personifies its descent and

putrefaction.

The same processes—the deepening economic crisis of world capitalism, the ferocious struggle to control the world’s markets and resources—also drive the European powers to respond in kind to the US challenge. Above all Trump, May, Merkel, Macron and the rest share the same basic hostility to the working class, who must be made to pay for the trade and military war through the destruction of their jobs and living standards.

A genuine movement against the societal promotion of inequality, nationalism, xenophobia, militarism and war that has become associated with the name Donald J. Trump demands the unification of the British, European, American and international working class against the imperialist world order and all its governments. It means the building of a new leadership to take forward the fight for a socialist alternative based on equality, internationalism and peace.



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