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Support from workers and youth in Britain for International Online May Day Rally

Our reporters
30 April 2021

Workers and young people in Britain spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* about why they are attending the International Online May Day Rally being held by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) on Saturday, May 1. We urge all to attend this important event by registering here.

James, a mental health worker from Bradford, said, “As a key worker in mental health, I am attending the May Day online rally for the purpose of expressing solidarity for workers, not only, but especially under conditions of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

“The surge in infections across the world, and the wake of misery and death thus resulting, is not a medical but a political phenomenon.

“It is the product of the policy of herd immunity: that is, the systematic exposure of workers to the deadly coronavirus with no recourse to safety measures, implemented by capitalist governments the world over and designed to maintain profit accumulation, at the expense of workers’ lives, to the financial and corporate oligarchy.

“A homicidal policy that has been followed in lockstep by the bureaucratized trade unions which have, at every turn, utterly blocked any and all struggles. Hence the urgent need for a conscious counter-offensive on the part of the working class—one that has originated in rank and file safety and action committees in workplaces, one that is fully independent of the trade union bureaucracy, and one that will be guided and developed through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-file Committees (IWA-RFC).

“It is necessary to unify, as workers, against capitalist exploitation and oppression, because only then can we combat the policy of herd immunity and bring the global

COVID-19 pandemic, at last, under control.”

WSWS reader **Joe Leibnitz**, a 21-year-old unemployed musician from Inverness in Scotland, said, “I believe the Mayday rally serves as a tool to broaden my perspective of global events. I think the international dynamic of drawing together the analysis of Marxists from all over the world gives it a truly internationalist character.

“I feel this is extremely important in a period when the bourgeoisie are increasingly turning to nationalism. Living in Scotland, I witness a great deal of political confusion caused by the drive of the Scottish National Party and the pseudo-left to a second Scottish independence referendum. In the context of a global pandemic, I feel events like the May Day rally are vital in combatting this political confusion.

“I recently attended an online rank and file committee meeting [in Britain]. I felt it was very powerful as it provided a platform for everyone from carers to students to National Health Service workers to voice their experiences and perspectives. I thought it was striking to hear how common many of the experiences of health workers were. It was extremely interesting to see how much money the unions actually made. It made me question why the unions are not holding an event such as this, and why they wouldn’t use their funds to oppose the re-opening of the economy. I support the call of the Socialist Equality Parties and the ICFI for the formation of rank-and-file committees internationally. It is important for workers to join the May Day rally to understand the importance of protecting their lives against the policies of the ruling class.”

Ken, a former building worker, reader of the WSWS and supporter of the SEP said, “I am attending the international May Day rally, because I believe that the

International Alliance of rank and file committees is the way forward to building a revolutionary party in the working class.”

Malcolm, a former coal miner from South Yorkshire in the north of England and long-time supporter of the ICFI stated, 'I'm attending the May Day online rally to listen to the perspective for the building of international rank and file committees.

“Having been a worker who in 1984-85 was involved in the British miners' strike, I have followed the WSWs ever since it was launched. Many workers start from understanding who their real enemies are, for example their employer, or an opposition party, or a specific MP, for example Margaret Thatcher; all these are true. But Marxists explain the crisis of revolutionary leadership. In other words, their enemies are much closer to home than workers realise. To understand these questions, the ICFI insist on a grasp of history for workers. The WSWs provides an invaluable archive record of the workers movement to draw on.

“Today's unions are corporatist unions. Unions run as businesses and mainly falling into line with the corporations they serve. Today, as the WSWs has stated, these organisations cannot even come close to calling themselves workers' organisations. This dreadful pandemic has exposed capitalism's allies and the unions for what they really are. The unions defend profits over the health and safety of the working class and hide their real political intentions behind the backs of workers.

“This is taking place amid a drive to world war with Russia and China. The working class requires a perspective to fight for its interest and this can only be found through the ICFI and the SEP's around the world and the fight to build international rank and file committees.'

Lee, from southwest England, is employed in a large distribution depot for a major supermarket chain which employs 3,000. He said, “I have never attended a May Day rally before. I steered away from politics until Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour Party leader in 2015. He spoke a language I could understand. But I feel let down. People have been crying out for socialism although they do not fully understand what it means. He betrayed that. Even if he had been elected to power, it would not have changed anything as we would have been stuck with capitalism.

“I have only come into revolutionary politics through meeting the Socialist Equality Party and coming across the *World Socialist Web Site* .

“Internationalism is all about tearing down national barriers. It's always been in the back of my mind, I thought it was a great idea but not practical. But I think we can do it now.

“I've been looking at history, looking right back to the Peasants Revolt in 1381. The names have changed but the issues are the same. It is about equality. Then it was the peasants, now it is the working class in revolt.

“When I heard about [Prime Minister Boris] Johnson's comments about letting the bodies in their thousands pile high, a picture came into my head of the British Generals in World War 1 sending working class lads over the top into the slaughter. There is a parallel with the pandemic and World War 1.

“At my workplace we have now received Lateral Flow Test kits and are testing twice a week. We were left with three dead from Covid-19 and around 68 infections last year. Meanwhile the company reported a profit increase of 8.4 percent. We did not even receive a Christmas bonus! I worked over the Easter holidays and only got the normal weekend rates. We are getting an £8 pay increase but it's probably going to be funded by not paying us for our half hour lunch breaks.

“The union at my place has a no strike policy. In fact, I would not call it a union, it is just an extension of management.”

“I saw an interview with Bill Gates defending the patent for the vaccines. It's sickening. It is all simply about profit. The aid being sent to India is pitiful, people are dying in their hundreds outside hospitals and through lack of oxygen.

“Since the Arab Spring there have been continual workers uprisings including the Yellow Vests in France. But these struggle have not been linked up. That is what needs to happen. I believe it can.”



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