

Workers and students in the UK speak out against imperialism and attack on democratic rights

“War abroad and repression at home are two sides of the same system.”

Our reporters

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Socialist Equality Party members have been campaigning across the UK with leaflets of the articles “Oppose Trump’s criminal invasion of Venezuela! Release Maduro!”, and “Venezuela and Ukraine highlight the bankruptcy of Britain’s official anti-war movement”. Workers and students have been giving us their thoughts.

Jenny, a student at Birbeck college in London and a three-time army combat veteran, said, “The U.S. has always claimed it wasn’t involved in colonisation, but they just chose a different name; it has had the same despicable results.”

The invasion of Venezuela “isn’t about drugs or democracy; it’s about power, resources, and control. Venezuela has oil, strategic importance, and refuses U.S. domination. That alone makes it a target.”

“The U.S. has a long imperial history in Latin America. When governments don’t comply, they are destabilised, sanctioned, or attacked. Calling a military operation ‘law enforcement’ doesn’t make it legal, it just hides imperial violence behind rhetoric.”

“Venezuela is a proxy battlefield in a wider U.S./China struggle. The raid sent a message: China is not allowed influence in the Americas. Smaller nations are treated as pawns in a great-power game they never chose. This is how imperial rivalry works: ordinary people pay the price for elite geopolitical competition.”

“Imperialism abroad always comes home. The same state that bombs, kidnaps, and sanctions overseas also kills migrants, crushes protest and criminalises dissent. The ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] killing [of mother of three Renee Good] in Minneapolis and the

repression of hunger strikers are not ‘exceptions’ they are the domestic face of imperial power. You cannot defend democracy while normalising violence against the powerless.”

“War abroad and repression at home are two sides of the same system. If we oppose police violence, border violence, and attacks on protest, we must also oppose imperialist war. International solidarity isn’t optional, it is necessary. The struggle for democratic rights here is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism everywhere.”

Stephen, a retired aid worker from Kenya now living in Sheffield, told the WSWS, “Trump’s invasion of Venezuela I equate to all his intentions to promote oligarchy, hegemony and flouting international law.”

He continued, “No one can think that Trump was acting to promote Venezuelan freedom! He is exploiting their oil, metal and other minerals,” adding that Trump’s foreign policy is intended to “inflict fear on the global south and even the US population”.

Stephen explained that abductions, like those of Maduro and his wife, are the twin of “extra-judicial killings that are witnessed around the world and done with impunity,” pointing out that “Trump, in his own words, said he does not recognize international law”.

Moreover, “Inside US, Trump associates all dissenting views to his poor governance and his uncontrollable behaviour with being leftist, socialist; he is using derogatory language such as ‘domestic terrorism’.” Stephen specifically opposed Trump’s anti-migrant attacks on Somalis.

“The shooting of Renee Good must be viewed based on the evidence of the videos and not from the Trump administration’s stand point. The killing is barbaric and should be condemned for what it is.

“As I have stated, Trump wants to enforce American hegemony, so he is testing the waters to see how the world will react. After Venezuela others will follow.

“The answer is that Trump must be stopped by all means,” Stephen concluded, asking “what the UN General Assembly was doing apart from lamentations?”

Gale, an actor and drama student at Leeds City College, said, “We can clearly see that the objectives were to take over Venezuela and take the oil to make more money for capital—for capitalist gain. It’s quite clear Trump’s after the oil and the money.”

He added, “I do see it as a wider geographical confrontation. As we know, the biggest oil buyer of Venezuela was China. So, it’s clearly a dig at China to get an advantage over them in the global market and to cause global tensions to rise. I also see it as a move to raise tariffs as well.”

“Trump and Starmer are in it for themselves,” Gale continued. “They’re here for the money. They represent billionaires and capitalists. Labour say they are a left party; they’re clearly not a left party and we need a left alternative. For me, it’s about a socialist, left alternative. We need a socialist government.”

Thanking the reporter for the interview, Gale explained, “It gets my voice across, and I’m one small voice among millions of people that are concerned with what’s going currently going on in the world with the rise of the far right and austerity for workers.”

He concluded, “I’m an optimist, so I hope this year is the year of the left, the year of the socialists, the year of the workers. I hope this year we gain some traction, that we rise, we fight.”

Amy, a student in Manchester, told WSWS, “The motivations are oil. Trump said it’s oil. It’s not even like I think they are covert motivations. He said he wants to take over the oil. They have the biggest proven reserves in the world.”

Of Trump’s statement that the US wants to “own Greenland”, she said “Greenland’s been back on the cards, isn’t it? Everyone’s talking about Greenland again. I think they [the US] are showing that they can do things and are making other people bend under their will.”

Asked her opinion of the Labour government—headed by former human rights lawyer Keir Starmer—and his refusal to acknowledge any violation of international law

by the US in its invasion of Venezuela, Amy said, “I was unsurprised by the whole thing. It’s what we’re getting more and more used to him doing.”

Jack, also a student at Manchester, said, “I agree it’s oil and he is stealing oil tankers. Venezuela has a reserve of 312 billion barrels. Obviously what Trump wants is a return to a prior period where Venezuela had a privatised oil industry, and it would be good for US interests and US companies to take back control of that.”

Britain was “definitely in the camp of America. We’re under their sphere of influence. And Starmer just follows whatever Trump says. That’s been the relationship we’ve had with America even prior to Trump. There’s contracts for security, military, and things like healthcare that get outsourced to American companies all the time.”

“International law means nothing to them [the Labour government] because we are under the sphere of American influence.”

Asked his thoughts on the attack on democratic rights at home with repression worsening against protests opposing Israel’s genocide in Gaza, Alex said, “Yes, it’s an imperial boomerang. So, what happens overseas, like you see in Palestine, boomerangs back to us. Like the surveillance state that the Palestinians live under, it boomerangs back to us one day. They’ve already got lots of cameras here and facial recognition systems.”

“In the year ahead, I see America exerting its power more. I think we have to look at the 1930s and Germany. Their [the Nazis’] excuse for economic troubles was a ‘Jewish problem’. And they became the scapegoat in the same way that people crossing the Channel are now the scapegoat.”

“I think we have to build solidarity against it, and also in workplaces as our pockets are getting tighter.”



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