Attend SEP (UK) online meeting: “Europe in revolt: A new stage of the class struggle”

17 November 2026

On Wednesday, November 18, at 7pm, the Socialist Equality Party (UK) will host an online public meeting, “Europe in revolt: a new stage of the class struggle”.

Our main speaker will be Alex Lantier, national secretary of our sister party in the Trotskyist movement, the Parti de l’égalité socialiste (PES). He will be joined by the national secretary of the SEP (UK) Chris Marsden.

The meeting will provide a Marxist analysis of the wave of protests and strikes sweeping the continent. It will be held after the national strikes called in France on November 5, mass mobilisations in Spain, a public sector strike in Ireland set for November 12 and youth protests in Germany.

Workers and students are fighting against the cost-of-living crisis, militarism and conscription, the rise of the far right and climate catastrophe.

The same struggles will come to Britain. They are held back only by the restraints placed on workers and youth by the trade union bureaucracy, the Greens and the Corbynites, and by the nervousness of the Labour government in implementing the full austerity and militarist programme demanded by the ruling class. Neither can last.

All of the fundamental issues driving the protests in France, and across Europe, affect Britain as well. Public debt as a percentage of GDP is approaching 100 percent; it faces some of the highest borrowing costs in the G7 as investors push for cuts to social spending commitments.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham and Chancellor John Healey have insisted that “we have to bring the benefits bill down”. They have left themselves a £17 billion shortfall in public spending which will have to be addressed at next year’s spending review.

At the same time, they have committed to an additional £11 billion spent on the military to bring defence spending up to 3 percent of GDP by 2030. Defence Secretary Wes Streeting has told the public they have now less than 1,000 days to prepare for war.

Events in Europe confirm the revolutionary tasks facing the working class and the need for a socialist programme to match.

Governments across the continent are refusing to meet protesters’ demands, instead replying with unprecedented repression: over 10,000 arrests, mostly of minors, in France, savage police brutality and soldiers on the streets. They are preparing the full force of the state to implement savage spending cuts and rapid remilitarisation.

The warmongering agenda common to all the European imperialist powers and every capitalist party has brought the continent and the world to the brink of catastrophe—direct war between nuclear-armed NATO and Russia.

Far right parties are rising in the polls, increasingly turned to by the ruling class as a battering ram against social discontent, even as growing numbers of people move into left-wing struggles against war and social inequality.

Pro-capitalist parties like Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s La France Insoumise, Sumar and the Socialist Party in Spain, and the Left Party in Germany, propose to answer workers’ demands with a parliamentary programme of pseudo-reforms—in opposition to a class struggle against capitalism. They are aided in this by the trade union bureaucracy.

But theirs is a programme for betrayal and defeat. Contemporary capitalism provides no basis for reforms; it is destroying those of the past. If the illusions sown by Mélenchon and company do not provide a path into power for the far right—as is already threatened with Marine Le Pen’s poll-leading National Rally—then LFI-type parties will govern on the brutal terms dictated by

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the corporate and financial oligarchy.

Workers must learn from the disastrous experience of Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) in Greece 10 years ago, and the similar experience with Podemos in Spain.

The same bankrupt politics in the UK, pursued by Jeremy Corbyn, has kept a right-wing Labour government in power and reduced “left” opposition to Zack Polanski’s thoroughly conformist Green Party.

Workers need a new, socialist internationalist, political leadership to guide their struggles. Objectively posed by the strikes and protests spreading across the continent is a pan-European struggle against war and economic hardship, and their source in the capitalist system of private property and nation states.

But realising this potential requires new forms of class organisation—rank-and-file committees independent of the union bureaucracies—and a revolutionary socialist political programme based on Marxism. Only on this basis can the working class break free from the influence of its pseudo-reformist misleaders.

Join the SEP and PES for a discussion of these vital questions on Wednesday November 18. **Register now!**



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