

Workers Weekly

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Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting, July 12, 2025

Northern Region, Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

138th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting

The Working Class Is Back, Still Here, and the Future Is in Our Hands!

The 139th Durham Miners Gala takes place on Saturday, July 12, 2025. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the Miners Strike. A spokesperson for the Durham Miners Association (DMA) said: "More than a generation after the last pit closed, the Gala stands as a living testament to the enduring strength of the Durham coalfield and its traditions. This year's Gala is a proud celebration of inclusivity and solidarity. The Big Meeting will provide a space where all communities can come together in friendship and unity." This year the DMA says that we will be celebrating working-class resilience, solidarity, and unity under the theme "We Are Still Here". This is indeed the truth of the modern working class movement. The working class is back, still here, and the future is in our hands!

Alan Mardghum, Secretary of DMA, in his message in the Gala programme said that "just 40 years ago Thatcher and the Tories called us the 'enemy within', and used the full forces of the state to defeat us and destroy our livelihood. We proudly say to them: the pits are no more but we are still here! And the slogans on our banners have not changed!"

This year the Durham Miners Gala has again taken a stand against the Israeli genocide in Gaza and in solidarity with the Palestinians' resistance to it. The DMA issued a statement on June 30 which is in the Gala programme, saying: "At the 139th Durham Miners' Gala on Saturday 12 July, Ambassador Dr Husam Zomlot, Head of the Palestine Mission to the UK, will join the platform speakers, and we will use the occasion to voice our solidarity with the Palestinian people in the face of genocide." They end the statement: "To him, his family and his people we say: the Durham Miners' Association will always stand by you." We fully endorse that heartfelt sentiment!

The DMA also announced that the 2025 Gala's "Big Meeting" will feature speakers who include Jeremy Corbyn, Member of Parliament for Islington North, Dr Husam Zomlot, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to



the UK, Sharon Graham, General Secretary, Unite, Eddie Dempsey, General Secretary, RMT, Chris Peace, Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, Matt Wrack, Acting General Secretary, NASUWT, and Alan Mardghum, General Secretary, DMA. The platform will be chaired by Stephen Guy, Chairman of the DMA, who expressed his excitement at the line-up, which he said emphasised the Gala's tradition of international solidarity and its significance as a trade union event. The DMA organisers also announced that, in partnership with Durham Pride, the "pride bloc" will march through the city towards the racecourse with the rest of the banners and communities.

Today, we march in our thousands, in the columns of the heritage miners' banners and those trade union banners of the workers fighting for their interests today, proclaiming *Enough Is Enough!* Let us continue to discuss and plan to meet those challenges and build the solidarity of the workers fighting for their rights and interests and build the opposition against the system of direct rule by the rich.

The vicious anti-social offensive against the rights of the people, against their well-being and livelihoods, an offensive which includes the privatisation of public services, is an offensive which remains in place under the Starmer-led government. It must be challenged every step of the way. At the same time, the workers must step-up their resistance to the government's open involvement in arming and assisting Israel in the genocide in Gaza and the West Bank. As well, workers must oppose Britain's bombing of Yemen, and its support for Israel's and the US's recent criminal bombings of Iran. Workers must further oppose the continued escalation of NATO's dangerous proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. All these wars must be challenged with all the might of the working class if we want to secure peace.

The resistance of the workers, with the spirit of *Enough Is Enough*, is developing their consciousness, their discontent, and strengthening the outlook that the workers have the solutions to the crisis. But it is not only that; more and more the workers see that the society itself should be transformed, that the state itself should have the character of social production for the well-being of all. Not as the state is now when it is in the direct control of the billionaires and oligarchs, to control our industry, our NHS, our water, gas and other vital utilities, and even the private control of the armed forces and its weapons. That state is all in the service of the profits of the oligarchs. But a state transformed so that the workers have decision-making power, so that the working class constitutes the public authority.

The state as it is, and the cartel party system in Westminster we are faced with, remain in place with the Labour government. It is significant that no speakers representing the old parties are today on the Big Meeting platform. With Keir Starmer's government now failing in the eyes of every worker, every attempt is being made by the rich and their media to create the illusion that yet another cartel party, such as the Reform party, is an alternative. Reform is yet another cartel party in the hands of the rich. The alternative, the only way forward,

as the DMA has pointed out, is for the working class to organise around its values: "our beliefs in community, in the labour movement and in social justice." But even more than that, the workers must begin to challenge the cartel party system itself by directly electing their own



worker politicians in their communities whom they choose and who are answerable to them. This is the path to the democratic renewal of society which empowers the decisions of the workers, the working class movement and their communities, to run society and set the direction for the economy. It is only the working class and people's forces themselves who have the interest in fighting for the general interests of society to solve the problems at home and bring about peace in the world.

Let us continue this legacy that the working class is not only back and still here, but is fighting for our future today. The time is now for the working people to renew and strengthen their organisations fit for the challenges of today, stand firm and speak out in their own name, with their own outlook and programme to build the opposition to paying the rich and their pro-war agenda which wants to consume our youth in imperialist war. It is represented in the Murton banner and struggle of the Murton miners and their march back in 1985 highlighted in the Gala programme and the Murton contingents at the Gala over many years that have come with so many youth with the motto emblazoned on their banner, "The Future Is In Your Hands".

Build the Resistance!

Build the Voice of the People!

Take up Renewal of the Political Process!

Together We Can Achieve Success!

Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

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