

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity

# weekly worker



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officially in gestation, it can  
be all things to all people**

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Towards a mass Communist Party

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# MAKE YOUR PARTY NOW!





# LETTERS



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed

## Marxist unity

I have been following, albeit not closely, the merger talks between the CPGB, the Marxist Unity Caucus of RS21, TAS and *Prometheus*. It seems like there have been some barriers to a full organisational merger.

Whether this is from problems of organisational culture, inability to agree on aspects of a full programme or whatever is beside the point - these issues take time to fully hammer out between existing organisations. However, with the formation of Corbyn and Sultana's party, it is more imperative than ever that these 'orthodox Marxist'-inspired groups quickly form an agreement around a minimum platform for engaging with the new party. The earlier this platform is hammered out, the better positioned a pro-party tendency will be to set the conversation in the new party.

*Initiative* is key here. All parties within the merger talks must quickly agree to forming a joint faction - even if outside the party they retain their independent organisational structure (for now). Initiative is something comrade Max Shanly was able to successfully achieve with his draft 'constitution and standing orders' for the new left party, based on the constitution and bylaws of the Democratic Socialists of America, with a few tweaks favoured by the DSA's left wing. Because of his timing, with a document ready to go in the very early stages, he was able to get this in front of the organisers of the party.

If a British 'Marxist Unity' faction coheres quickly, it would be ready with a coherent and developed vision for a mass-membership, democratic-republican party. It would be miles ahead of the rest of the far left. As comrades know, this

is a rare and historic opportunity. In the US, the Marxist Unity Group has had a great deal of success over the last four years, now best representing the views of about 10% of the DSA's delegates at this month's national convention. Delegates passed our resolution, 'Principles for party building', and our ideas on partyism specifically are hegemonic within the organisation's left wing (which was shown to be the majority of the organisation at said convention).

Had we been ready to launch when the DSA first blew up in 2017, we might be much more dominant in the organisation. A British Marxist Unity faction could quickly surpass our successes. A repeat of Labour Party Marxists, or a faction by any one of these particular groups on their own, would probably not be able to go beyond its own artisanal limitations.

It's imperative all sides of these talks act quickly and decisively. Take the initiative, comrades!

**Parker McQueeney**  
USA

## Spart unity

In a letter sent to the central committee of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation, the Spartacist League of Australia, the local franchise of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), expressed their desire to join the RCO.

The letter follows a period of extended polemical discussion between *Partisan!* (the publication of the RCO), and *Red Battler* (the publication of the SLA) on the necessity of a communist party and the strategy needed to bring it about. In their response to the RCO called 'Road to party', the SLA clarified their disagreements with the RCO, stating that they agree with the need to fight for communist reunification on the basis of a revolutionary programme. However, they maintain that, rather than unity being a prerequisite for an effective fight against state-loyalism in the

workers' movement (that is, the fight to split the working class from the Australian Labor Party), such revolutionary regroupment is only possible through the process of a struggle against Labourism.

Having clarified our differences in strategic approach through open polemics and debate, the SLA has come to the conclusion that, though differences in views remain, those differences are better resolved in the same organisation rather than separately. As such, the Spartacists have requested to join the RCO, understanding that the RCO is an organisation which welcomes political differences and accepts the right of its members to organise into factions.

This is the most substantial vindication of the partyist strategy in Australia thus far, particularly in terms of the culture of discussion surrounding the RCO. The fostering of ties to the Spartacists through joint work in Victorian Socialists and other areas, as well through discussion and socialisation at events hosted by the RCO, evidently helped open the door to unity. This, in combination with the polemical culture of the RCO through *Partisan!*, has allowed us to clarify our differences with the Spartacists, which in turn has shown the basis for unity between our two organisations. That these are among the most prominent areas of work for the RCO should be taken as a great credit to us as an organisation.

This move towards unity should also be considered in the context of the evolving politics of the ICL(FI). Since the death of Jim Robertson, and the broad failure of their long-time strategy of going straight to the masses, the Spartacists globally have moved away from the sectarian positions they are most commonly known for. Initially, this has manifested in a more traditional entryist strategy with regards to the DSA and the Australian Labor Party, on the basis of a 'splits and fusions' strategy. In Australia in particular, however, this manifested last year in a merger with a young and minor orthodox Trotskyist outfit, the Bolshevik-Leninists, who brought some much needed young blood into their organisation.

The publishing of *Spartacist* 70 earlier this year has further developed this reorientation to the existing left. The latest edition of the Spartacists' theoretical journal outlines the need to regroup revolutionary forces on a principled basis. Unity with the RCO appears to be the first significant instance of this new strategy being put into effect.

Unity with the Spartacists also has significant implications for the direction of the RCO. Beyond just being a vindication of partyism, it is also likely to further develop the informal factions which already exist within the RCO, as the Republican Communist, Marxist-Leninist, Left-Communist, and now Trotskyist elements form more formal tendencies. This is at once a challenge and opportunity, as we will be put to the test regarding whether we are capable of existing as a truly multi-tendency organisation. Most exciting, however, are the implications for our relations with other sects, particularly ones we are already friendly with. If we succeed in bringing about unity with the Spartacists, whose name has historically been a byword for fierce sectarianism, it bodes well for the chances of unity between the RCO and other sects on the Australian left.

We are excited to report on further

developments to our international comrades.

**David Passerine**  
Revolutionary Communist Organisation

## Stainless banner

Comrade Yusuf Zamir of the Union of Turkish Progressives argues that Lenin in *State and revolution* mistakenly supposed that bourgeois law, and therefore the bourgeois state, would continue in the first stage of communism (Letters, July 24). He says that "in *Critique of the Gotha programme*, Marx never uses the term 'bourgeois law' in his analysis of communist society. He refers only to 'bourgeois right'."

This is a common translation mistake. Marx's German original refers to the continuation of *bürgerlicher Recht* in the first phase of communist society. The German word *Recht* is translatable either as *right* when it refers to an individual right (like a right of private property or a constitutional right) or as *law* when it refers to a general body of legal doctrine - thus *Strafrecht* (criminal law) and *Deutsches Recht* (German law). And thus *bürgerlicher Recht* (bourgeois law).

Lenin's further step from bourgeois *law* to the bourgeois *state* reflects the fact that the *theories of law* that were overwhelmingly dominant in the 19th century, which were forms of 'legal positivism', denied that non-state law could properly be called law.

We cannot, in fact, be confident that Marx would have rejected this step, since careful students of Marx's references to law in his writings have found instances of his making 'legal positivist' claims, as well as of his using variants on Hegel on law, and also his using interpretations of law as part of the ideological superstructure: eg, M Cain and A Hunt *Marx and Engels on law* (Cambridge MA 1979); P Phillips *Marx and Engels on law and laws* (Oxford 1980).

The underlying issue is that it is a mistake to try to find a pure 'stainless banner' of Marx hidden behind the 'stained' banner of the 20th century left, or, conversely, a moment of original sin which offers a simple explanation of failures - the 1875 Gotha unification as taken to lead to the political collapse of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in August 1914, or Engels' alleged vulgarisation of Marx to August 1914 and to Stalinism, or *State and revolution* to Stalinism. We need to construct a 21st century communist understanding on the basis of both the progress of human understanding of the world (Marx's and Engels' 'scientific socialism', thus including modern biology and anthropology, and prehistory, as well as history, as studied since the 1880s) and the full range of the experience - positive and negative - of the workers' movement.

**Mike Macnair**  
Oxford

## SPGB confusion

Andrew Northall accuses me of being "confused and confusing about the necessary conditions for the transition to socialism and communism" (Letters, July 24). How so?

I have stated quite clearly that for a socialist (aka communist) society to materialise, what is required is (1) the productive capacity to meet the reasonable needs of the population and (2) mass socialist consciousness based on the desire to implement such a society and a basic understanding of what it means. What is so confusing or confused about that?

Andrew states: "On the question of '50% plus one', I could easily quote

from a number of SPGB publications over a good many years, where it is stated this is indeed all that is required to democratically establish socialism." If that is the case, why does he not provide the evidence to prove his point? I provided direct evidence to show that, on the contrary, the Socialist Party of Great Britain envisages the need for a substantial majority to be in place before you can have socialism.

He asks what would happen if there were just a simple majority of socialist delegates in parliament? Well, there would be no question of the SPGB "taking office" to administer capitalism in these circumstances. The SPGB has no interest in becoming another capitalist government.

However, we would be interested in ensuring that support for a socialist society was sufficiently broad-based - not just in the UK, but globally - and one can think of technical procedures one can employ to ensure this outcome, such as only contesting some of the parliamentary seats, rather than all, until the movement felt support for socialism was sufficiently substantial.

Andrew asks (presumably rhetorically): "Has the SPGB never come across Marx's classic observation that 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas of society'?" Of course it has, but what of it? That may well be why "socialist and communist ideas have really struggled to take hold in anything like a significant part of the working class under advanced capitalism", as he says, but it does not alter the fact that you are not going to get rid of advanced capitalism unless and until a significant majority want a genuine alternative to advanced capitalism.

Andrew criticises me for saying that it was Lenin who invented the distinction between socialism and communism and that this was not to be found in Marx and Engels. Confusingly, he quotes the *Communist manifesto* and the *Gotha critique*, which refers to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He misses the point completely. The dictatorship of the proletariat is emphatically not what Marx and Engels meant by socialism. Socialism is a classless society, which, by definition, the DOTP is not.

The SPGB holds that it is necessary for a working class majority to capture political power to establish socialism. We don't see the need for this class to perpetuate its own existence as a new ruling class (an incoherent idea anyway, since you cannot administer an exploitative society in the interests of the exploited class, namely the proletariat). For us in the SPGB, the capture of political power is tantamount to, or synchronous with, the self-abolition of the proletariat and hence the abolition of capitalism. The transition is what we are in now, not what follows after we have abolished our status as an exploited class.

Andrew avers: "Robin bizarrely asserts I am 'inadvertently advocating a form of capitalism in this transitional phase'. No, I explicitly stated I was not advocating the continuation of capitalist society and the working class in power would move rapidly to socialise the main means of production and distribution subject to the democratic planning of society. So in what possible sense is the great majority of the working class still subject to "an exploitative, class-based society"?"

This is quite extraordinary. Andrew does not seem to grasp the simple point that the very existence of the working class is

## Fighting fund

## Back with new tasks

Let me start with some very good news following the *Weekly Worker's* three-week summer break. Thanks to some excellent donations at the end of last month, we shot past the £2,750 target for July by £680! Well done, everybody - just what we needed to help contain our ever-growing expenses.

But now we need to follow that up with similar success in August and I can tell you that, with two thirds of the month gone, we now have £1,808 in this month's kitty - and I'm confident we can reach that £2,750 target once again!

As you might expect, there've been quite a lot of contributions received over the last three weeks. First of all, no fewer than four comrades made brilliant *three-figure* donations - thank you, comrades AC, TB, SK and PM. Other contributions via bank transfer/standing order came from PB (£80), MM (£75), LC (£50), TR (£40), BO (£35), MM (£31), CG, DV and NH (£30 each), RG, NR, TW and GB (£25), LM and OG (£24), and DL, MT and DR (£20 each).

On top of that, there were a good few smaller - but still

highly valued - SOs or transfers: thanks also to CP (£16), BC and AN (£15), RM (£13), RP, IS and RD (£12 each), MM (£11), DI, CH, SM, PM, CC and JL (all £10).

But that's not all. Other comrades clicked on that PayPal button on our website - most notably PM and KS (£50), while ST (£20), JV (£7), JN, SO, AR, RD and GP (a fiver each) all helped to take our running total for August up to £1,808.

So can we do a repeat performance this month? Well, as I write, there are still 11 days to go to raise the £950 we still need. Will you play your part in helping us to ensure that the *Weekly Worker* can play its vital role - now, of course, in the fight to organisationally build, and programmatically equip, the Jeremy Corbyn Party, Your Party or whatever it's eventually called? ●

**Robbie Rix**

Our bank account details are name: Weekly Worker sort code: 30-99-64 account number: 00744310 To make a donation or set up a regular payment visit [weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/donate](http://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/donate)



itself proof positive of the existence of capitalism. That’s precisely why what he proposes amounts to the continuation of capitalism.

He even advocates the continued use of money in this class-based ‘transitional’ society of his. Granted, the existence of money *per se* does not signify the existence of capitalism, but what is absolutely clear is that the existence of money is completely incompatible with the existence of a classless socialism.

This was the point I was making about Marx being at pains to explain that labour vouchers were not money, since they did not circulate. Money is not just a means of “effecting rationing”, as Andrew naively assumes. It is also a social relationship, signifying private property, and it was not for no reason that Marx was critical of the labour money schemes of Ricardian socialists like John Gray

Also, contrary to what Andrew claims, the SPGB does not ignore the “threat posed by a recently deposed capitalist class and all of its supporters”. If a recalcitrant minority seeks to obstruct the wishes of the majority, then we say forcible measures will be needed to deal with this.

However, unlike Andrew, we hold that, when the working class becomes more and more socialist in outlook, this will massively impact on the social climate in a way that will progressively diminish the strength and influence of the shrinking proportion of the population that still actively opposes socialism. By the time most people are socialist, you can bet that most of the rest of the population would be well on the way to becoming socialist themselves.

Finally, I cannot let Andrew get away with the nonsense he comes out with about food production. Where does he get the bizarre idea that I am suggesting “the peoples in the ‘advanced’ capitalist countries should as part of worldwide socialism have their own calorific intakes radically reduced to just above subsistence levels”? That’s ludicrous. On the contrary, I pointed out very clearly that already more than enough food is produced today to adequately meet the needs of everyone. Global output is 2,800 kcal per person per day. Global requirements per person is 2,200 kcal per person per day on average. Go figure.

The truth of the matter is that an enormous amount of food is simply wasted under capitalism - somewhere between 30% and 40%, and more than enough to banish hunger everywhere and completely. It’s the same with housing. There are four million empty houses in Spain, 15 million in the USA and over 60 million in China.

Capitalism’s structural waste is truly colossal. Most of the work we do today is completely socially useless and is only needed to keep the capitalist money economy ticking over on its own terms. All of this wasted labour and resources will be made instantly available to boost socially useful production, come socialism.

I think I’ve mentioned this point to Andrew at least two or three times before, but still he seems determined to ignore the argument and put the most pessimistic neo-Malthusian gloss on the prospects of socialism happening. I wonder why?

Robin Cox  
SPGB

## SPGB time

I note Andrew Northall’s lengthy response to the letter by Robin Cox about the interminable length of time it will take us to get anywhere

near ‘full socialism’. Methinks Andrew - a former member of the SPGB himself - doth protest too much. This is evidenced also by the vehemence of his phraseology (“confused and confusing”, “breathtaking”, “exceptionally foolish”, “utter fantasy”, etc.). Well, I won’t attempt to compete for length or rhetoric, but I will try to make some salient points for him and other readers to consider.

Firstly, the established position of the SPGB is that we will need an overwhelming majority of workers to develop socialist consciousness before a socialist society can be established - not the “50%+1” Andrew says the party is looking for. This being the case, Andrew’s idea that “a recently deposed capitalist class and all of its supporters” would not give up “their vast wealth, privilege and power” without a fight, while not entirely unfeasible, is surely somewhat unlikely. After all, such a group would constitute a tiny minority, pitting themselves against a population with developed socialist consciousness and intent. But, if they did attempt what Andrew calls “recalcitrant actions”, one can only agree with him that force might have to be used to deter them.

Secondly, on the old story of the two stages of post-capitalist society (ie, a lower one called ‘socialism’, where the state, money, wages, etc will continue to exist, and a higher one called ‘communism’, where they won’t), as espoused by Lenin and repeated by Andrew, no warrant for that distinction exists in Marx, as others here have pointed out. To insist on such a distinction has the effect of pushing into some far-distant future the realisation of a classless, stateless society of democratic self-organisation and free and spontaneous access to goods and services.

Thirdly, key to Andrew’s conception is the notion that there simply won’t be enough to go round in the initial stages of socialism in order for free access and a comfortable existence to be available to everyone. He is critical of Robin’s reference to the Food and Agriculture Organisation’s figures on food sufficiency on grounds of practicality and distribution. But a plethora of sources conclude not just that enough is already being produced to satisfy everyone’s needs the world over at ‘advanced’ capitalist level, but that many times that could be produced, if it were not for the massive waste inherent in production for profit and the obstacles placed in the way of production by the market.

To cite just one example, Carolyn Steel’s well-informed book, *Sitopia: how food can save the world* (2021), points to feasible ways one third of the global food supply could be saved, which would be enough to feed the world’s hungry 23 times over. It also talks about the potential of “vertical farming”, describing, for example, a vertical aeroponics farm in a disused steel mill in Newark, New Jersey, which already has year-round production, multiple growing layers and up to 30 annual harvests of all imaginable crops, giving yields 130 times greater than a conventional farm - and all without soil, sun, rain pesticides or tractors.

So, in insisting that years or even decades of development would be needed before everyone could be supplied at a comfortable level, Andrew seems to be denying that the technology that now exists to produce an abundance of food and the other necessities of life for all

couldn’t very quickly be available in a society that had consciously opted for a world of cooperation and shared resources without borders, without states, without leaders and without alienated labour.

Marx’s time was relatively primitive in terms of techniques of production and distribution, so it’s hardly surprising that he should have voiced some notions of initial rationing. But this has changed radically since then, so that there can be little doubt that the means to establish very quickly indeed a completely-free-access society will reach the “practical and realistic” level Andrew refers to. After all, detailed plans will no doubt already have been made for it within the latter stages of capitalism by a population increasingly ready to welcome a new society and preparing to join together collectively to bring it about on a world scale. That will be the real ‘transition’ Andrew says we need.

To see it any other way is to be unduly pessimistic and to ignore the mental flexibility of human beings and their ability to embrace change and social cooperation.

Howard Moss  
Swansea

## Your Party joiner

I was pleased to read about the launch of Your Party.

Because of this I issued a press release complete with my photo to the *Fenland Citizen* calling on Your Party supporters in Fenland to contact me. This featured in the print edition and also on its website. I also posted the press release to a dozen Facebook pages covering Fenland.

With 800,000 people nationally registering an interest in joining Your Party, I guess that there are several hundred Your Party supporters in Fenland. Yet not a single one in Fenland has contacted me. I can only conclude that the working class in Fenland are more interested in supporting Reform UK.

I think that Paul Demarty in his article in the *Weekly Worker* has illusions in the Labour Party continuing to be a major party with hundreds of MPs (‘In for the long haul’, July 24). Paul underestimates the hatred that working class people have for Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour government, and are therefore turning *en masse* to Reform UK.

I can see the election of a majority Reform UK government at the next election. Just as Jack Conrad failed to foresee the election of Donald Trump as US president, I think that he fails to foresee the prospect of Nigel Farage as the next prime minister. At the same time, the Tories will have hundreds of MPs.

At the next general election I think that Labour will be lucky to get 50 MPs. At the same time, Your Party and the Green Party will each win around 10 seats. The trade union barons will continue to fund the Labour Party, which will trundle along. This will be while the majority of trade union members vote Reform UK.

Marxists should engage with Your Party. The people behind it - a collective consisting of 20 leftwing groups and the WhatsApp group consisting of advisers to Jeremy Corbyn - model Your Party on Podemos, Syriza and Die Linke. But, after some success, these parties are in crisis and in decline.

Whatever the long-term prospects of Your Party, Marxists should use it to train a new generation of Marxists who will see the need to build a mass, democratic communist party in Britain and across Europe.

John Smithee  
Cambridgeshire

# ACTION

## Stop arming Israel - boycott Barclays Bank

**Saturday August 23:** Nationwide day of action. Demand the British government stops arming Israel. Demand Barclays stops bankrolling Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Call on Barclays customers to move their accounts. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: [palestinecampaign.org/events/boycott-barclays-day-of-action-5](https://palestinecampaign.org/events/boycott-barclays-day-of-action-5).

## Stop researching new nuclear weapons

**Wednesday August 27, 12 noon:** Protest outside the University of Sheffield AMRC, Wallis Way, Rotherham S60. Demand no more research into weapons of mass destruction. Organised by Yorkshire CND: [www.facebook.com/YorkshireCND](https://www.facebook.com/YorkshireCND).

## Glasgow Living Rent manifesto

**Saturday August 30, 10am:** Open meeting, Ibrox Parish Church, 65 Clifford Street, Glasgow G51. Discuss renters’ demands ahead of the 2026 Holyrood elections. Topics include more and better social housing and more affordability and quality in the private sector. Organised by Living Rent: [www.livingrent.org/open\\_meeting\\_on\\_living\\_rent\\_manifesto\\_glasgow](https://www.livingrent.org/open_meeting_on_living_rent_manifesto_glasgow).

## Resist the world’s worst arms fair

**September 1 to 12:** 12 days of protest outside the DSEI arms fair, Excel Exhibition Centre, Western Gateway, London E16. Business is booming for the arms industry. Thousands of exhibitors will be dealing in equipment to cause untold death and destruction. Join the discussions, training and actions - themed events every day. Organised by Stop the Arms Fair: [caat.org.uk/events/stopdsei2025](https://caat.org.uk/events/stopdsei2025).

## We refuse: saying no to the army in Israel

**Friday September 5, 7pm:** Book launch, Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. Author Martin Barzilai discusses his book of interviews with conscientious objectors and dissidents, who have refused to join Israel’s conscription army, the Israel Defence Force (IDF). Tickets £4 (£1). Organised by Housmans Bookshop: [housmans.com/events](https://housmans.com/events).

## National march for Palestine

**Saturday September 6, 12 noon:** Assemble central London, venue to be announced. Stop starving Gaza; end all arms sales. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: [palestinecampaign.org/events/summer-of-action-for-gaza](https://palestinecampaign.org/events/summer-of-action-for-gaza).

## Stand up for choice

**Saturday September 6, 2pm:** Counter-protest. Assemble at the Millicent Fawcett statue, Parliament Square, London SW1. Oppose anti-abortion groups and stand up for the right to choose. Organised by Abortion Rights: [www.facebook.com/Abortionrightsuk](https://www.facebook.com/Abortionrightsuk).

## Remember Burston Strike School

**Sunday September 7, 10.30am to 4pm:** Rally, Diss Road, Burston, Norfolk IP22. Commemorate the longest strike in history. Free entry. Organised by Unite the Union and the TUC: [burstonstrikeschool.wordpress.com/2025-rally](https://burstonstrikeschool.wordpress.com/2025-rally).

## Lobby the TUC

**Sunday September 7, 1pm:** TUC rally, Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Road, Brighton BN1. Urge the TUC to call a national demonstration against Starmer’s cuts. Organised by National Shop Stewards Network: [www.facebook.com/events/1361950818235603](https://www.facebook.com/events/1361950818235603).

## Marx Memorial Library open day

**Saturday September 13, 11am:** Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1. Explore the historic building, which includes the office where Lenin edited *Iskra*. Organised by Marx Memorial Library: [www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk/event/510](https://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk/event/510).

## Wigan Diggers festival

**Saturday September 13, 11.15am to 9.30pm:** Open-air, free festival, The Wiend, Wigan WN1. Commemorating Gerrard Winstanley and the 17th century Diggers movement with music and political stalls. Organised by Wigan Diggers Festival: [www.facebook.com/events/1178446303737306](https://www.facebook.com/events/1178446303737306).

## March against Tommy Robinson

**Saturday September 13:** Assemble central London, details to be confirmed. The TUC and many affiliated trade unions are supporting this demonstration against the far right and racism. Organised by Stand Up to Racism: [www.facebook.com/StandUTR](https://www.facebook.com/StandUTR).

## Tommy Hepburn memorial lecture

**Saturday September 13, 7pm:** Public meeting, Tyneside Irish Centre, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1. Speaker: George Galloway. Organised by Follonsby Wardley Miners Lodge Banner Association: [www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2020287222049136](https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2020287222049136).

## Trump not welcome

**Wednesday September 17, 2pm:** National demonstration. Assemble Portland Place, London W1. Protest against Starmer’s Labour government for inviting Trump on a second state visit. Trump’s support for Israel has facilitated the genocide in Palestine. Organised by Together against Trump alliance: [stopwar.org.uk/events/trump-national-demonstration-against-state-visit](https://stopwar.org.uk/events/trump-national-demonstration-against-state-visit).

## What is communicated by leftwing jargon?

**Thursday September 18, 7.30pm:** Public meeting, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate’s, Oxford OX1. Organised by Oxford Communist Corresponding Society: [x.com/CCSoc/status/1945206861013094717](https://x.com/CCSoc/status/1945206861013094717).

## CPGB wills

Remember the CPGB and keep the struggle going. Put our party’s name and address, together with the amount you wish to leave, in your will. If you need further help, do not hesitate to contact us.



**JCP**

# Make Your Party now!

The mass movement in solidarity with Palestine is taking party form. Now what matters, says Jack Conrad, is getting the structures, above all the politics, right. Reject Labourism, reject federalism

**A**fter much dither, delay and a damaging false start, more than 800,000 have signed up to Your Party (otherwise known as the Jeremy Corbyn Party or JCP). Even if only a quarter become members, that is a very considerable force. Effectively what we are seeing is the pro-Palestine movement taking party form. Something we communists have long called for and very much welcome.

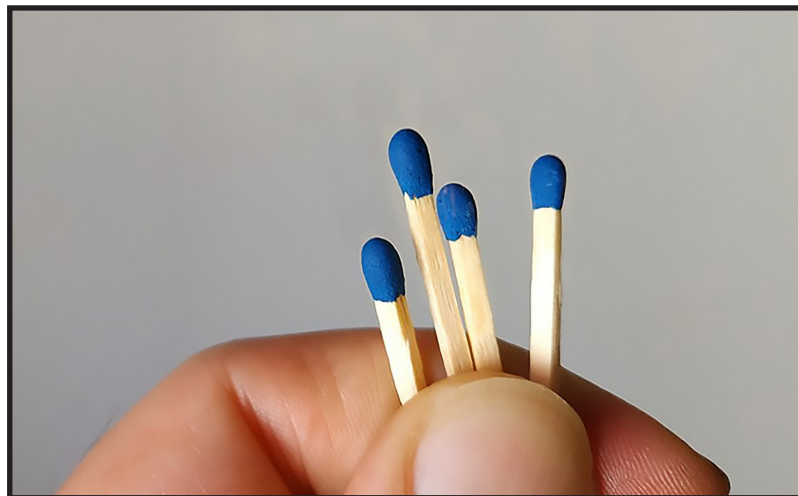
As a mass opposition party - that actively encourages and relies on the self-activity of its members - the JCP gives the left a real chance to fundamentally change things in Britain. The balance of forces can be radically shifted in favour of the working class. Achieving such a positive outcome is, however, only possible if we have bold, far-reaching, genuinely transformative, political goals.

At present too much of the left is mired in narrow-minded conservatism, and/or is simply fearful of its own shadow. Every organisation, apart from the irredeemably sectarian, has told its members to sign up. Nevertheless, typically, the aim is simply to win the next round of recruits for the confessional sect. That and promoting this, that or the other extraordinarily limited pet project.

Take the Socialist Workers Party. It remains fixed on "a left/campaigners' umbrella" with strong basic principles and the right of individual candidates to go further if they want".<sup>1</sup> However, what the SWP triumvirate - comrades Tomáš Tengely-Evans, Lewis Nielson and Joseph Choonara - have in mind with the "go further" formula is the sort of campaign conducted by their Maxine Bowler when she stood as an *independent* candidate in the July 2024 general election. Her manifesto can be summed up as Palestine, Palestine, Palestine ... that and a few altogether vague condemnations of the Tory government for its "anti-migrant racism, attacks on working class people, and all their rotten policies".<sup>2</sup> Left reformist populism, in other words.

Hannah Sell's Socialist Party in England and Wales is no better. Thankfully, the excruciatingly unsuccessful Tusc coalition has been put on the back burner for the time being. Nonetheless, SPEW remains doggedly committed to the federal principle - a principle, note, categorically rejected by both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks at the RSDLP's famous 2nd Congress in 1903. Speaking on behalf of the majority and *centralism*, Georgi Plekhanov uncompromisingly denounced the "federal principle" as "harmful, bringing disruption and death".<sup>3</sup> Dumbly, unencumbered by the least notion of Marxist orthodoxy, *The Socialist's* editorial says: "A founding conference with delegates from affiliated trade unions, affiliated political and working-class community organisations, plus groups of independent councillors would be a good first step".<sup>4</sup>

Worryingly, but hardly surprisingly, Corbyn, interviewed by Owen Jones, has expressed support for a party that "would end up with some kind of federal nature and trade union involvement will be an important part of it".<sup>5</sup> That would, of course, amount to a Labour Party mark two. An oafishly retrogressive aim, which sees SPEW urging trade



**One out of four chance of being chosen ... but with 800,000?**

unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party and affiliate to the JCP.

Imagine for one moment if that happened *in real life* - admittedly a highly unlikely scenario. It would amount to nothing more than rerunning the history of the Labour Party mark 1 founded in 1900 in the expectation of obtaining different results (Albert Einstein's definition of insanity). Bloc votes wielded by trade union general secretaries such as Sharon Graham, Gary Smith and Christina McAnea would see the JCP yanked to the right, democracy reduced to an empty husk and yet another round of mass demoralisation.

Not that we dismiss the Labour Party mark 1 as a site of struggle. Even under Sir Keir Starmer, it remains, no matter how attenuated, a bourgeois workers' party. The JCP should certainly not be touting an electoral alliance with the Greens (James Schneider has called for joint primaries to choose candidates<sup>6</sup>). Instead we need to think about positive ways to engage with and challenge the Labour left, not least via the affiliated trade unions.

## Sects of one

Others, usually sects of one, see only the negative side of the larger left groups. Various devices are thereby lighted upon, or are hatched as if anew, in the attempt to keep out or neutralise.

Tony Greenstein wants bans and proscriptions: "we can't have parties within parties, otherwise we'll have the old fractious debates".<sup>7</sup> So it is back to the future and yet more witch-hunting. The same effectively applies to the social-imperialist outfit, Anticapitalist Resistance: "firm rules on discussion" would prevent the "ultra-left" raising 'crazy' demands such as a popular militia or the communist programme for revolutionary change.<sup>8</sup>

Zarah Sultana has canvassed the seemingly democratic idea of an OMOV Zoomocracy.<sup>9</sup> Passive members vote on chosen issues from the comfort of their homes. Conference debates and blocs of leftwing delegates are thereby sidelined or swamped in an avalanche of clicks. Interestingly, in this context, the Socialist Majority caucus, the self-styled moderates in the Democratic Socialists of America, attempted to carry out their own OMOV coup *against democracy* at the recent, August 8-10, Chicago convention. Believing their majoritarian factional pretensions, they lost by a convincing 60:40 margin. Excellent.

Ed Griffiths recommends sortition, ie, eschew elections and turn

decision-making over to randomly selected members. Great for juries and 'guilty', 'not guilty' verdicts. Fine, perhaps, under full communism where everyone does their duty and takes their turn in governing. But under conditions where the main task we face is overcoming the *disorganisation* of the working class brought about by a whole history of bureaucratic managerialism, defeat and atomisation - well let me put it politely - the suggestion is criminal. Sortition does nothing to facilitate the *collective* organisation, *collective* action and *collective* class consciousness that we so urgently need to rebuild.

Naturally, sortition is given a demagogic spin. It means, says comrade Griffiths, "giving up the idea that political decisions should in general be taken by the people who are 'best' at taking them (because they are the most popular, or the best educated, or the richest, or the mouthiest, or anything else). A random sample is statistically representative of the whole membership. Subject to some not-too-big margin of error, it will vote the same way as the whole membership would - if there were a way of getting everybody in the room and letting them debate the question together."<sup>10</sup>

However, any such averaging out, if institutionalised, especially in our historically specific conditions, would serve to lower, not raise, the general political culture of the JCP through an inevitable tendency to dumb down. After all, those, that is the great majority, not randomly chosen for decision-making duty, play no part in decision-making. And, no less to the point, sortition leaves *effective* political power in the hands of the self-appointed elite who, in reality, get to choose, frame and steer, all the questions up for decision-making. The result, would, once again, be a disaster, yes of the kind that wrecked Momentum (note, Jon Lansman carried out an anti-democratic coup in the name of democracy with the full blessing of John McDonnell, Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn).

We oppose all attempts to silence or marginalise the left through speech controls and other such bureaucratic devices. We favour a culture of open, honest and robust debate between groups and individuals. No compromise on this can be brooked. Debate may sometimes be sharp, passionate, even angry - true: but "to write without 'anger' of what is harmful means to write boringly" (Lenin).<sup>11</sup> We are, after all, talking about *real* debate. So things *should*

be presented clearly, starkly, if need be brutally. People ought not to have to read in between bland lines or be expected to interpret Aesopian pronouncements. Far too much of that is going on already.

There should be elections from the bottom up. Branches must be autonomous, not mere transmission belts, and therefore free to elect their own committees and delegates to regional and national conferences. Being popular, educated, well off or mouthy should not bar anyone. No less to the point ... nor should political shade, background or factional loyalty. Electing someone you trust, someone you agree with, someone you believe will put up a good fight, that should be considered perfectly normal. Not something to be feared and guarded against.

So the right to form, or belong to, a temporary or a permanent faction or platform should be guaranteed in the rules. As a fallback, though, mere acceptance would be fine in the interim.

All committees, up to and including the national committee, should be elected, accountable and recallable. The same applies to officers, but especially councillors and MPs. They must be our servants, not our masters. They should represent the party. Not their atomised constituents. They should live like ordinary workers too: not privileged members of the middle class enjoying bloated salaries and maxed-out expense accounts. Take no more than the average wage of a skilled worker. Donate the balance to the party.

Along the same lines, whoever the national committee elects as 'party leader' should have no more than a symbolic, a nominal role, so as to formally comply with the requirements of electoral law. The unedifying 'who will be the leader' dispute between Corbyn and Sultana - both career politicians - testifies to an elitist mindset that ought to be discarded once and for all. No kings! No queens! No labour dictators!

JCP members should not rely on a shadowy clique of half a dozen top individuals to do the 'right thing'. In all probability they won't. Nor should we wait till November's formal launch and a stage-managed, hybrid rally/conference. At a local level comrades are rightly forming branches. However, things need not stop there. Form regional committees, form a national committee. Choose election candidates. Establish online and print publications. Make Your Party now!

## Education vital

While organisational structures are important, politics are vital.

We communists agree with, and will seek to work closely with, those who want a complete break with Labourism, broad frontism and all varieties of reformism. Historically, not only has Labourism predictably failed to produce socialism. Halfway houses such as Die Linke, Podemos, Syriza and Respect have proved next to useless too. The same has to be said of Corbynism and Corbyn's *capitulationist* leadership of the Labour Party between 2015 and 2020 (paid advice coming from none other than James Schneider at the start and ending with the seconded services of Andrew Murray).

Given escalating tariff wars, the climate crisis, the bloodbath in

Ukraine, the Gaza genocide and the danger of the US-China conflict culminating in a generalised nuclear exchange, humanity faces a stark choice: barbarism or socialism. Harking back to the "mass appeal and bold policy" of Corbyn's *For the many, not the few* (Zarah Sultana)<sup>12</sup> simply will not do. Indeed it screams of a total failure of the imagination. Programmatically, *For the many* did not even pass muster as reformist. It was, at best, sub-reformist. A hopeless promise of a nicer, a kinder, a caring, sharing capitalism. Such are the delusions brought about by capitalist realism.

We openly seek to transform the JCP into a Communist Party. Fundamentally that means equipping the JCP with a Marxist minimum-maximum programme. The minimum programme is the maximum we can achieve under capitalist conditions and the minimum we require if the JCP is to enter or form a government: eg, abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords, establish a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, support Irish unity, replace the standing army with a popular militia, oppose all imperialist wars, alliances and occupations, proportional representation, go beyond carbon neutral, free movement of labour, work at full trade union rates of pay, abolish the anti-trade union laws, healthcare for all, genuine equality for women, end discrimination against sexual minorities. With state power secured, albeit in the form of a semi-state, the maximum programme of transitioning to full communism and the principle of 'from each according to their ability and to each according to their needs' begins. Something which, of course, has to be international in scope. There can be no local or national socialism.<sup>13</sup>

Towards that end we shall promote political education: official/unofficial, local/national, online/face-to-face. We shall combine this approach with drawing sharp lines of demarcation. Immediately that means establishing a red line against those who favour, or who are soft on, Zionism. In terms of political economy there can be no escaping the fact that Israel is a genocidal project. In the Ukraine war too, draw a red line of demarcation against those who side with our own ruling class.

Differentiation brings clarity and strength ... but our general approach must be education, education, education ●

## Notes

1. *Party notes* August 10 2025.
2. *Socialist Worker* May 31 2024.
3. B Pearce (trans) 1903: *second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party* London 1978, p129.
4. *The Socialist* August 7-20 2025.
5. www.youtube.com/watch?v=49jppx61YhY.
6. *Novara Media* July 25 2025.
7. www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqYnKnCW8Q&t=3318s.
8. anticapitalistresistance.org/new-left-party-an-historic-opportunity. The author, Dave Kellaway, is, we are informed, a contributor to *International Viewpoint* and still a member of Hackney and Stoke Newington Labour Party. How he has managed to survive the 'anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism' witch-hunt is a mystery for me.
9. *Novara Media* July 28 2025.
10. x.com/EdmundGriffiths/status/1956426422509088993.
11. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 35, Moscow 1977, p47.
12. *Sidcar* interview, August 17 2025.
13. See CPGB *Draft programme* London 2025: communistparty.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Draft-Programme-Post-print-With-Cover-April-2025.pdf.



# Whose party is it anyway?

While Your Party remains in gestation, it can be all things to all people. But sooner or later lines will have to be drawn. **Paul Demarty** argues for open contestation between programmes, not individuals

**D**espite the rather shambolic manner in which the thing was initially launched, Your Party - as the long-heralded Jeremy Corbyn split from Labour is, hopefully temporarily, called - has gotten off to a good start.

It achieved 800,000 sign-ups within just weeks, and even in the worst-case scenario - where every last one of them is a wholly passive clicktivist - that is still a significant reservoir of goodwill to draw on. Of course, the worst case is not at all likely to be true: very many will have been activated by, in particular, the Palestine solidarity movement, which has drawn millions into active protest.

In previous iterations of the anti-war movement, the question has inevitably arisen: what happens *after* the big demonstration? Where do people go? What do they do next? Too often, the left has only had one answer: the *next* march. When Jeremy Corbyn was Labour leader, there was that option, and indeed Labour's membership swelled spectacularly at that time. Now we have another option - or at least, the germ of one.

Exactly what this thing is to become remains wholly obscure. The difficulties of the public announcement in the end are merely symptomatic of a *refusal* of decision. Is this supposed to be a mass membership political party? A loose umbrella group for occasional electoral campaigning? What is its political character? Who is in charge?

So far, these questions have fallen at the feet of a heterogeneous clique of former Corbyn-world notables and people thrown into prominence by 'independent' electoral campaigning in last year's general election. These people have hopelessly divergent views on all the essential questions, which has led to paralysis. Now that the initiative has been smoked out by Zarah Sultana - to her credit, she at least has the requisite gumption to get things moving - the shadowy working group has been left with no choice but to call a founding conference, though the disagreements continue over what form that will take.

## Infighting

The latest indication of such infighting comes from Max Shanly, who claimed on Twitter/X that "there has been a coup of sorts in the working group responsible for the founding conference, with decision-making power now centred around an even smaller group of people", who are apparently representatives of the "LOTO faction" - that is, 'leader of the opposition', so presumably insiders of the Corbyn Labour leadership like long-time Unite official Karie Murphy (Shanly does not name any names, unfortunately). This would put MPs in the driver's seat for the founding and presumably result in a centrally directed party with no real structures.<sup>1</sup>

No independent confirmation of this has been forthcoming, but, regardless, complaints on the part of Shanly - a well-connected semi-insider in the whole process, who has drafted a constitution for the organisation and has definite ideas about how the conference should be organised - may be taken as dispositive that there is *some* dispute in process about these matters within the totally opaque circles in charge of such things.



Remember what happened last time round

We cannot know what the motivating reasoning is here, but it is suspected that part of the problem will be keeping on top of the existing organised left. Organisations of the latter - the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party in England and Wales, Revolutionary Communist Party, and even far smaller outfits like ourselves - punch above their weight. They can get branches of the new party going more easily, stand delegates and get their policy in front of more branches far more effectively than isolated random individuals. The celebrity clout of a Jeremy Corbyn or Zarah Sultana can too easily result in a 'generals without armies' situation (or rather, generals without NCOs), and therefore reversion to bureaucratic methods to maintain control.

It is no surprise to find such thinking reflected within the old-school far left itself, alas. Thus Dave Kellaway, a member of the pro-imperialist-Mandelite Anticapitalist Resistance, worries about how the influence of "Leninist" groups can be controlled. He rejects the idea that the participation of such groups "is a bad thing ... If you are an open, inclusive party, you cannot put a veto on the participation of several thousand seasoned and dedicated activists."<sup>2</sup>

But "sometimes Leninist groups do alienate people by the crass way they work in the mass movement. For instance, the Revolutionary Communist Party has already said it will be joining to transform the party into a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party. Farage - no mug - even invited one of them onto his GB News programme." Therefore the new party must clamp down on "fruitless propagandising" by way of "firm rules on discussion". Rules, no doubt, to be drawn up and enforced by a certain comrade Dave Kellaway ...

A milder version is on offer from the independent socialist (and occasional *Weekly Worker* contributor) Edmund Griffiths, who takes the view that delegate elections from branches are inadequately

democratic because they will tend to be unrepresentative. In his words, delegates will tend to be "(a) independent councillors and other local bigwigs, (b) members of pre-existing left groups with experience ramming their slate through meetings of front organisations, and (c) mouthy, self-confident individuals who managed to make it clear they would be annoyingly upset to be left out".

## Random selection

His preferred method is sortition - the random selection of individuals to participate in the conference:

Sortition means giving up the idea that political decisions should in general be taken by the people who are 'best' at taking them (because they are the most popular, or the best educated, or the richest, or the mouthiest, or anything else). A random sample is statistically representative of the whole membership. Subject to some not-too-big margin of error, it will vote the same way as the whole membership would - if there were a way of getting everybody in the room and letting them debate the question together ... It will be sociologically typical of the whole membership: delegates will not be much older or younger, much richer or poorer, much likelier or less likely to have a disability, much likelier or less likely to have a PPE degree, than the average of the membership. They will not systematically differ from the average in any way at all - something elections struggle to achieve even when they are supplemented with targets and quotas.<sup>3</sup>

There are huge problems with this approach - leaving aside the fact that it is totally undemocratic. It is first of all not clear that a random sample could be large enough to be representative in this way - a point discussed in Edmund's article. I leave this aside, since that is a matter of the concrete numbers involved.

There is a related practical problem, which is: a random sample of who? The 800,000? If so, what if someone gets selected and does not want to do it? Presumably then the duty falls to someone else. There is an old story of a prisoner locked up on remand, who sees written on the cell wall: "Congratulations. Your future is in the hands of people too stupid to get out of jury service." It is not stupidity that is the matter here, but simply that the people who pick up the baton will tend to be more actively interested in politics, and therefore more likely to be one of Edmund's bigwigs, big-mouths and Trots. If it is not the 800,000, then how is a smaller core selected? I cannot see a way of doing so that does not select in precisely the same way.

The last practical problem I will mention - say we have our sample, and it assembles to found the party at this conference. What business lies before it? What does it vote on? Is part of the duty that these random individuals are to do a bunch of homework and provide worked-out policies in good time? Are we to assemble a constitution in real time, clause by clause, like a great bureaucratic game of exquisite corpse? In any real-world scenario, this material would have to be provided, as a jury decides on evidence submitted by the defence and prosecution. And it would be provided, as are the exhibits in a criminal trial, by 'specialists', whether that means credentialed experts or experienced political operatives.

## Consciousness

The practical problems point to more fundamental ones. The first is that political decisions are never taken *ex nihilo*. We confront these choices as, in the first place, matters of radical uncertainty involving intangible value judgments and, secondly, as choices between already available alternatives. If something really new arrives in the course of debate, it emerges *from* the conflict

of the antecedent positions. A well-informed decision therefore *requires*, so far as possible, that all well-supported alternatives are before the body making the decision. Delegate conferences do this imperfectly, but better than all the alternatives, since it is *political organisations* that are both most able to formulate policy and best at ensuring they have delegates to advance it.

The second fundamental problem has to do with those intangible value judgments. They do not appear *ex nihilo* either. They are formed through our lives and particular experiences. Being a member of a disciplined left organisation provides a certain sort of formation (or range of formations), but those who are not such members also have their fundamental commitments, gut feelings and conscious priorities shaped by forces external to them as individuals. For all their faults, the left organisations uphold traditions of political practice and reflection on political history far in advance of the 'spontaneous' ideas of untutored individuals. The latter will never attain sufficiently adroit and well-informed political consciousness without confronting the best ideas - such as they are - that are already out there, which *necessarily* belong to such organised traditions (that is not to say, of course, that they must in the end *adopt* any of these ideas).

The trouble with the left groups is that they tend to erect barriers around their members to *prevent* the confrontation of their ideas with rival programmes. So, for example, we read in *Socialist Worker* that the SWP "hopes that a new left alternative is broad and pluralist, one which revolutionary socialists can be part of, while maintaining independent revolutionary organisation and politics".<sup>4</sup> Pluralism is precisely a way of avoiding direct conflict, and thus a recipe (presumably) for building up SWP 'base areas' within the new party where their members can be *protected* from rival political visions. Instead of doing its duty and raising comrades up to new heights, the SWP in this way serves to deaden their political instincts and leave them helpless when real conflicts do, inevitably, arise.

In reality, the shape of the conference will be decided by the mysterious working group; it will be done, however, partly reactively, in response to the 'facts on the ground'. For our part, we strongly encourage initiatives to go ahead and *form* branches or proto-branches, not wait obediently for an email from Jeremy Corbyn or Zarah Sultana (never mind Karie Murphy!) instructing us to do so. We must take the initiative - not least because the *éminences grises* at the centre of all this seem quite incapable of doing so, with honourable exceptions like Sultana and Shanly. The initiative will be taken, if indeed it is, by people of some political experience - which means membership or past membership of the left groups or Labour (and active, not paper membership) ●

paul.demarty@weeklyworker.co.uk

## Notes

1. x.com/maxshanly/status/1957069077517599178.
2. anticapitalistresistance.org/new-left-party-an-historic-opportunity.
3. edmundgriffiths.com/newpargetsor.html.
4. socialistworker.co.uk/labour/activists-get-behind-new-left-and-the-fight-to-shape-it.



**JCP**

# Taking off ... despite the leadership

Contrary to what Zarah Sultana thinks, her OMOV proposals would make Your Party less, not more, democratic than even today's Labour Party, warns **Carla Roberts**



... and who knows what he has in mind?

**T**he fight between the two factions in the leadership of the Jeremy Corbyn Party - aka Your Party - is heating up. On the one side, there is Karie Murphy, former right-hand woman of Jeremy Corbyn when he was leader of the Labour Party and partner of the influential Len McCluskey, former Unite general secretary. She seems to be trying to make Your Party as undemocratic and tightly controlled from the top as possible. Talks of a successful 'coup' led by her, however, might have been slightly exaggerated.

No doubt she is *trying* to further sideline the small group of 40 or so hand-picked people who are currently allowed to discuss the future direction - all behind closed doors. Murphy wants to hand over the organisation of the launch conference to six MPs - ie, Jeremy Corbyn, Zarah Sultana and the four others in the Independent Alliance. While those four are all strong supporters of Palestine, none of them can be said to be socialists or even genuinely on the left. Adam Shockat (MP for Leicester South), for example, argued in a cringeworthy interview: "If we call ourselves 'left', people on the other side of the spectrum might feel alienated."

The other side is now led by Zarah Sultana and ANC

veteran Andrew Feinstein, who are increasingly open about their criticisms of Murphy's bureaucratic manoeuvres. In a recent interview with *New Left Review*, Sultana complains: "Between 2015 and 2019 I had friends and colleagues who worked at the top of the Labour Party, and they can tell you that in parts it was a highly dysfunctional working environment with toxicity and bullying - not from Jeremy, but from some people around him. Power was too centralised. This is not what we need for this emerging project."

However, her understandable disdain for the Labour bureaucracy leads her to bend the stick in the opposite direction:

Those who participate in our inaugural conference have to take part meaningfully, and that can only mean 'one member, one vote' (OMOV). There should be an accessible venue, as well as a hybrid aspect with low barriers to entry. We should be striving for mass participation, as opposed to a narrow delegate structure, which could be unrepresentative of our base.

OMOV sounds very democratic - but really is not, once you think through the implications. For example, we hear that Feinstein and Sultana are the ones controlling the YP database, probably because it was decided to merge the new

YP data (currently over 800,000 signatories) with the hundreds of thousands of signatures collected by 'Team Zarah' when she jumped ahead with announcing the formation of the new party. A gamble that seems to have paid off for her. There is also a substantial amount of money being donated by the 800,000 supporters - again, we hear it is Sultana and Feinstein who, let us say, have 'access' to the funds and can make 'recommendations' on how to spend them. They are currently in talks with various 'movement groups' and "tech co-ops" with the aim of developing "online digital deliberation platforms", which are supposed to aid discussion of proposals before conference and probably e-voting at conference.

Perhaps recognising how atomising and demobilising such methods can be, they are proposing that there should also be 10 regional assemblies, with around 1,000 supporters in each, which would be "consulted" about their views in the run-up to the founding conference. It is unclear if Feinstein and Sultana want delegates to be elected at these assemblies. Perhaps this is what Andrew Feinstein meant when he talked about Sheffield comrades "choosing delegates"-see report.

A similar idea was put forward by James Schneider, former press secretary of Corbyn, who explained in an interview with *Novara Media*

on July 25 that he had been part of the inner circle "for about a year". But he sees no need for democratically chosen delegates: "There will soon be a number of big regional meetings, which are 'deliberative', which will be discussing the issues that are then worked out into options which will then go to a sovereign conference of all members ... This has to be done via online voting, as there are no other structures set up."

It does not take a genius to see the obvious problems with this method. Who is formulating these 'options'? Who will decide how they are to be presented? Who will be allowed to move them at the conference? Who will be able to participate in a meaningful debate that voters at home could listen to in order to make an informed decision? Even if those formulating the 'options' had the best of intentions, the outcome would be pretty much a foregone conclusion. Add to that the possibility of Jeremy Corbyn getting up to endorse this or that option - and you can save yourself the bother of spending thousands on 'online digital deliberation platforms'.

Contrary to what Sultana might think, this method is actually *less*, not more, democratic than the much-curtailed democracy of even today's Labour Party. It will, in fact, give the central bureaucracy *more* power.

All the while, Jeremy Corbyn

sits in the middle of all of those factional struggles, not wanting to get involved, but to keep everybody happy and feeling included. This indecisiveness and dithering at the top is becoming an increasingly debilitating problem, as Max Shanly writes on X: "Coups take control of things. In this case, the thing to be taken control of is the opinion of one rather gullible man. If the emperor keeps listening to the wrong advisors, maybe we need rid of the emperor."

It is excellent that groups up and down the country have started to take matters into their own hands. They are not waiting for the victory of this or that faction - or indeed the launch conference, whatever it may look like. Clearly things are very much in flux and by getting organised below, on regional and perhaps even a national level as well, YP supporters can help to shift things quite dramatically in the next few months - in terms of both the democracy and the politics of the new party.

That is why the *Weekly Worker* wants to publish reports and notifications of meetings taking place - please send them to [editor@weeklyworker.co.uk](mailto:editor@weeklyworker.co.uk) (the deadline is Tuesday 6pm each week) ●

## Notes

1. [novaramedia.com/2025/05/27/the-new-party-beyond-london](https://novaramedia.com/2025/05/27/the-new-party-beyond-london).
2. [newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/the-alternative](https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/the-alternative).
3. [www.globalplayer.com/podcasts/episodes/7Drshub](https://www.globalplayer.com/podcasts/episodes/7Drshub).

## It's happening here, there and everywhere

We want reports of what is going on around the country. Here are some of those we have received

### ■Sheffield in the forefront

There was some trepidation in the run-up to the first meeting of Your

Party supporters in Sheffield on August 13, organised by Sheffield Left. Some of the 230 people who quickly joined an open WhatsApp group were worried that we should "wait for Jeremy" to tell us how

and when to organise. We shouldn't really be doing anything before the launch conference in November.

But then Andrew Feinstein agreed to speak at the meeting and, with less than 24 hours to

go, Jeremy Corbyn sent a video message, congratulating people for taking the initiative. This was, to our knowledge, the first such endorsement for a Your Party branch and has quite rightly been

interpreted as a starting signal for other groups across the country to get off the ground.

About 140 people showed up on August 13, while another 50 watched on Zoom. Andrew



Feinstein, answering questions, was happy to explain that the new party “would not be making the same mistakes again, when it comes to the anti-Semitism smear campaign” and also warned that “we will have to resist attacks on the ideologies of some of the people involved in the new party”. He is right to foresee the successful witch-hunt being broadened out to other areas.

He also spoke about the need for the party to create its “own independent media outlets, including a national newspaper which could have space for local content”. This is an absolute necessity and a very welcome suggestion. But it needs to be open and democratic, not a boring advertising sheet like *The Socialist*. It must feature political discussions and debate. After all, there are huge questions facing the organisation: Should it be openly socialist? Or just ‘left’? Should we aim to become ‘the next government’- or should we learn the lessons from Syriza, Podemos, Rifondazione Comunista, Die Linke, etc, who inevitably ended up running capitalism, and should we therefore concentrate on being a strong and effective political opposition instead? Open and democratic debate around those issues is the only way to create meaningful unity.

Despite the excellent turnout, the numerous members of the Socialist Workers Party in the room kept repeating how the meeting was “not representative” enough, because it was mainly “just the organised left” and that we need to go “out there” etc, which was most sharply expressed by the local SWP leader Tom Kay: “It’s all well and good talking about policies. But we are not going to stop the fascists with good socialist policies, are we? The only thing that’s going to stop them is being out there on the streets. And I don’t care if you’re in the Green Party and if you’re buzzing because of Zack Polanski. Come and join us on the streets”.

What a strange contribution. Socialist policies are *exactly* what is needed to defeat the right!

It is also extremely daft to criticise the fact that it was mainly “the organised left” was present. For a start, this layer will no doubt form the backbone of the new Corbyn Party. Putting ourselves down or, worse, pretending we are not actually members of any particular group is extremely dishonest. Yes, of course we need to win the majority of the working class to the fight for socialism/communism, but, having dedicated your life to the fight for socialism should not be presented as some kind of problem ●

Tina Becker

## ■Not just crumbs in Manchester

Manchester’s first Your Party meeting took place on August 19. Counterfire were the organisers. The upper hall of Friends Meeting House was packed out, with easily over a hundred attending. The main platform speakers were independent socialist councillor Michael Lavalette, independent councillor Abdul Waheed from Oldham and former Workers Party of Britain parliamentary candidate Aroma Hassan.

The common theme was the need to get going, using the energy from the Palestine movement and hatred of Keir Starmer’s Labour Party to build what Lavalette called a “movement party”, where elected representatives are “megaphones for our movement”.

Contributions from the floor expressed the wide range of views in our movement. Ian P from Anticapitalist Resistance warned

the meeting that we must avoid sectarianism - a sentiment echoed by the chair, Penny H, who remarked on the number of organisations represented at the meeting. Speakers from the Revolutionary Communist Party, Talking About Socialism, Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century and the Socialist Workers Party all addressed the meeting alongside trade union and movement activists.

Soraya Lawrence from TAS made the case for a clear programme that opposed the profit system and fought to “change the system completely”. Amy L from the SWP spoke forcefully on the new party having the ability to win people over by putting the case for an alternative that defends migrants and trans people against attacks. Palestine was a theme throughout, with one contributor explaining that “Palestine has woken us all up” and has led people to make links between British foreign policy and attacks on living standards and democratic rights at home.

Many spoke on the need for the party to be democratic with a comrade from RS21 making the case for a party where the national conference was the highest decision-making body, for ‘one member, one vote’ and against a federal structure. The opportunity of this new party was summed up by an RCP comrade, who argued that the deep-seated anger across society can be mobilised to say we don’t just fight “for crumbs, but for the whole bakery”.

Upcoming meetings on Your Party in Manchester include one organised by the SWP and another organised by Greater Manchester Supporters of Your Party - both at the Friends Meeting House ●

CJ

## ■Croydon hopes for big times

I wouldn’t have thought it possible just a year ago that Cedar Hall in Ruskin House - the Croydon HQ of the Communist Party of Britain - would host members and supporters of diverse left groups to talk about working together. If not being afraid to debate differences and willing to focus on a bigger cause is what unity in one party looks like, then this was a good start.

There it was: Tuesday evening, August 19, and well over 100 people sat (and stood) to discuss what can be done to make Your Party a reality. The organisers, Croydon Assembly, were surprised by the big turnout, given that it was August and many people were away. As you might have expected, there were the trade unionists, local activists, betrayed Labour Party members, a good many SWPers and CPBers - but there was also a solid flank of young members of the organised left - including the Revolutionary Communist Party and Anticapitalist Resistance. They made up a good third of the gathering.

Despite the last-minute scheduling, the organisers had managed to bring a panel of guest speakers together to kick off the debate: trade unionist and writer John McNally, Mel Mullins from Black Lives Matter and the RMT union, and activists from Disabled People Against Cuts and Friends of Palestine. After that, the floor was open to the public.

The intention was to split the debate between policies and then organisation. It didn’t quite get there, but enough was put on the table to work with at future meetings. McNally talked about the aim of the new party - to win back gains lost over the past decades, build solidarity across the left and

“give Starmer a message”. This shouldn’t be just a party, he said: it needs to be a movement; and, more than that, it needs to be an electoral force and a solid opposition to the other parties - Reform being the main one to fight. Building a mass and militant trade union movement was essential to this - a theme that was picked up again and again through the evening.

Agreeing on policies wasn’t the problem: anti-austerity, anti-cuts, anti-racism, pro-Palestine, reparations, housing, renationalisation of services, stopping the privatisation of the NHS and the introduction of socialist structures from the grassroots up. These had to be the things hammered out among party members to take to the doorsteps, so that a compelling alternative to Reform could be made to voters.

But what kind of party was it to be? There was the rub. Definitely an electoral party - there was agreement that enough progress must be made to stand for local elections in May 2026. Work must begin immediately to elect branch officers and then candidates, and a campaign set out, so that door-knocking can begin. This must be done before Corbyn’s ‘autumn conference’.

What might this look like? How might it be done? There was talk of a pact with the Green Party for its reach and organisational capabilities, the aim being to have a Your Party candidate for each district. Others, on the other hand, wanted solid red lines drawn regarding socialist issues, as the Greens offered no real anti-capitalist alternatives.

Structure should be democratic, with representatives elected and the grassroots movement making the party, not the other way around. Another said the form should be a federal one, with the trade unions taking a large stake. Profile-raising should be done through campaigning on local issues, such as what the council is doing with taxpayer money, funding of local services, and organising local counter-rallies where fascists are targeting hotels housing immigrants. National issues were also raised - raising awareness of benefit cuts and encouraging people to write to local MPs to demand change and delay Labour’s austerity push.

Bigger differences, however, were more apparent when it came to the question of whether we talk about socialism or Marxism. No-one mentioned the ‘c’ word. There was an obvious divide between those who didn’t want to shy away from the fact that ‘tinkering with the capitalist system hasn’t worked and never will’, that people should be reminded that Britain’s original ‘workers’ party’ - Labour - was never really that, and that Your Party should have at its core revolutionary aims, even as it tackles issues that voters care about. As one comrade said, invoking James Connolly, “Our demands are moderate - we only want the earth”.

Time and again, mainly young people stood up to say an anti-capitalist society was necessary to tackle issues voters care about, not a Labour Party mark 2, and that this should not be shied away from. Nor should we dodge capitalism’s role in international geopolitics, in Nato and the climate catastrophe. These should be part of open public debate and education.

Meanwhile, the ‘softly, softly’ brigade didn’t want to ‘scare off people’ with all of that. They wanted to stick to the line that people can have their say through the new party structure of being ‘from the grassroots up’ and

gaining workers’ power through a mass trade union movement, empowered by abolishing anti-union laws. Another said that “Marxism is irrelevant to the single mother with hungry kids” and “we shouldn’t bring these esoteric arguments to the doorstep - they do not help people”. Re-establishing trade union rights will. I say, let’s not clip the party’s wings before we even fly by underestimating the reasoning of the working class.

Towards the end, a CPBer gave what was for many the unpalatable message that it’s not enough to just want socialism and even be elected on those policies. The ruling class would just not allow it. No, socialism must be enforced. If Your Party is to get anywhere, he added, it needs to build relationships with far-left groups, without which it would lack the numbers and the experience of organising.

Nevertheless, there was solidarity in the room and every speaker was clapped and thanked, and there is cause for hope that Your Party will be big and strong enough to cover all opinions. As one RCP member said, “Reformism doesn’t work, only a revolution will. We will go all the way with Your Party to develop revolutionary policies.”

There’s a lot of ground to cover and a lot of hard work to do, but the evening ended with a show of unity: it was agreed to meet monthly, to elect branch representatives and to stand for the May 2026 local elections ●

Pat Taylor

## ■Even in the Isle of Wight

On August 14, 67 ex-Labour members, socialists, communists and others met in Newport on the Isle of Wight, and agreed by nem con vote to constitute themselves as the local branch of the nascent organisation. Discussion of what Your Party should be was initially wide-ranging over various different political positions, from localism to following the path of the 1945 Labour government, from reheated Labourism to revolutionary stances, and so on.

Initially, some present stated they were averse to being called or

to using ‘comrade’; but that faded into good-natured banter later. There was a handful of Green Party members present (some of whom were ex-Labour); there was also at least one current Labour Party member. Age-wise, the proportion of younger people constituted a large minority; a good number of them spoke and got an enthusiastic reception.

As the meeting moved beyond the halfway point, there developed a high level of support for the following key issues: a working class movement for socialism; getting rid of capitalism as a threat to us all (through environmental collapse or nuclear war); no pandering to the enemy ruling class mass media; establishing our own, working class media (including social media); and, most clearly of all, the need for a truly democratic party structure unlike the regime of the Labour Party in particular.

Only one vote was taken at the meeting, however, and that was to formally establish that this meeting was now to be considered the Isle of Wight branch of Your Party. At the next meeting, in September, the branch will have to decide its officers, which might meet partial resistance at least due to past experience of the Labour Party. Those present will have to be convinced of the overriding strength of recallability and basic democratic organisational methods, if the fears voiced at this meeting are to be allayed. Horror of the Labour Party regime runs deep. This constant theme met with audience support, especially after one person’s comment about there being only rightwing parties at present in Britain - one effect of which is the skewed reasoning that leads to increased support for Reform UK. Connected to this was a well-supported suggestion that there is now a big space marked ‘left’ that the new party should naturally inhabit.

Less than 24 hours after the meeting a lively Facebook page of a supporters’ group had already been set up, with postings from many of those present and from others who could not make the meeting. Branch life has begun ●

Jim Moody

## Online Communist Forum



Sunday August 24 5pm  
**Report from the MUG delegation - the August 8-10 DSA convention in Chicago**

Use this link to register:  
[communistparty.co.uk/ocf](http://communistparty.co.uk/ocf)

Organised by CPGB: [communistparty.co.uk](http://communistparty.co.uk) and  
Labour Party Marxists: [www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk](http://www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk)  
For further information, email Stan Keable at  
[Secretary@labourpartymarxists.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@labourpartymarxists.org.uk)

A selection of previous Online Communist Forum talks can be viewed at: [youtube.com/c/CommunistPartyofGreatBritain](https://youtube.com/c/CommunistPartyofGreatBritain)



**SOCIETY**

# Class composition in a snapshot

We must get beyond abstract dogmas and mere impressionism. Not that official statistics give us easy answers. In his opening article **Mike Macnair** outlines the different classes in the 2020s

**L**eft discussions of the politics of class in the UK are polarised between an abstract ‘Marxist’ orthodoxy, on the one hand, and mere impressionism, on the other. The abstract ‘Marxist’ orthodoxy takes the form of the claim that, since the internal logic of capital is towards social polarisation between capital and labour, marginalising household production, this must be the dominant tendency in the 21st century UK. Therefore the tasks of socialists are *simply* those of the working class majority taking over.

This line of argument is commonly accompanied by left syndicalism - the belief that the class struggle at the point of production, in the workplace, is decisive. The argument that the working class is the overwhelming majority is essential to left syndicalism, but left syndicalism is not necessary to the argument that the working class is the overwhelming majority or that the dominant tendency is towards proletarianisation.

The mere impressionism starts from the visible decline of militant strikes since the 1970s and of trade union density (down from 58% in the late 1970s to 22% in 2024), the decline of working class participation in the Labour Party and voting in elections, the dominance of students and ex-students in the organisations of the far left, the political role of ‘social movements’, and so on: to reach in conclusion broadly more or less ‘left’ versions of the politics of *Marxism Today*’s New Times: that is, rejection of the Marxist perspective of the centrality of a link between socialism/communism and the workers’ movement, in favour of forms of broad front, ‘left populism’ or ‘intersectional coalition’.

Addressing this question is seriously difficult. On the one hand, it is necessary to think through theoretically what is the actual nature of the Marxist claim that the internal logic of capital is towards social polarisation between capital and labour. This is not just a matter of acknowledging ‘counter-tendencies’ already recognised by Marx (a point made, for example, by Dan Evans<sup>1</sup>) since there is a danger that the recognition of ‘counter-tendencies’ produces theory that ‘explains’ all outcomes and therefore actually explains none.

On the other hand, it is necessary to think carefully about what the empirical evidence is actually telling us (and what it is not telling us). This is made particularly difficult by the fact that the statistics produced by the capitalist state are constructed using non-Marxist categories/definitions, which makes it hard to use them to test Marxist theory (the rejection of Marxist theory is built in *a priori* to the conceptual structure used to identify and to classify the relevant data), as will be seen below. What is needed is the sort of unpacking and reclassification work done by authors working on the rate of profit.<sup>2</sup>

In this article I am trying to make a very rough stab at the empirical side; afterwards I mean to return to the theoretical side. I do not have the skills to do the empirical work properly. So what I can do is a very, very rough approximation of a *snapshot* of the mid-2020s UK from the official statistics.

Any attempt to argue from projecting past trends into the future is right now severely problematic, given the movement into overt US protectionism and into ‘guns before



**That was 1922. What about 2025?**

butter’ rearmament and social welfare cuts. It is clear that these turns are not just Donald Trump (the current US president is merely more ostentatious about it than Joe Biden was), so they can be anticipated to continue after the 2028 presidential election. But it is absolutely unclear what the implications of these turns will be in five to 10 years time.

I think it is possible to approach the empirical issue from two angles. The first is UK population and the share in it of employed and self-employed; data from the ‘labour force survey’ about ‘social class’; and so on. This is indirect data about class, because the survey categories are non-Marxist, so that what is possible is at most an approximation. This will be the subject of this article.

The second is to look at data about the UK economy, so far as this tells us about imports, exports and locally consumed production and, in essence, how the UK population as such makes its living in world capitalism. This is again indirect data about class, because, first, a good deal of UK ‘product’ is actually merely income arising from production elsewhere in the world and, secondly, the shares of output are radically disproportionate to labour inputs sector by sector due to varying levels of capitalisation and consequent productivity. A second article will address this data.

In spite of the difficulties, it is worth making the attempt. Hopefully someone else with better skills than me in the field will correct what I have written and, in doing so, take our understanding forward.

## Population

We start with population. In the UK it is expected to hit 70 million in 2025.<sup>3</sup> The most recent estimates published are for mid-year 2023.<sup>4</sup> At that date UK population was estimated at 68.25 million (57.7 million in England, 5.5 million in Scotland, 3.15 million in Wales and 1.92 million in the Six Counties). 15.7 million (23%) are aged 19 or below;<sup>5</sup> 12.9 million (18.9%) are 65 or above.<sup>6</sup> This leaves 39.7 million people of “working age”.

There were 2.9 million students in higher education (HE) in 2023-24<sup>7</sup> and just over one million over-19s in further education (FE).<sup>8</sup> Since the FE numbers do not distinguish between full-time and part-time, and the HE numbers include 18 year-olds, it is probably an acceptable rough approximation to reduce “working age” numbers by 2.5 million, leaving 37.2 million.

As of August-October 2023, 9.3 million aged 16-64 were “economically inactive”: that is, not in employment, not seeking work in the last four weeks and not available for work in the next two weeks. 2.4 million of these were students; 2.8 million were long-term sick or disabled; 1.7 million were home-makers; 1.1 million were early retired; 1.1 million were “other”; 172,000 were short-term sick; 28,000 were “discouraged workers” who did not believe jobs were actually available.<sup>9</sup>

Out of these numbers “home-makers” fall to be categorised according to the class of their breadwinner; the long-term sick and disabled again fall to be located in class position on the basis of family background or prior employment; the early retired (where this is not a result of long-term sickness) fall into the class of petty rentiers.

In any case, in terms of the analysis of the *relative size and social weight of classes in Marxist analysis*, the starting point has to be the economically active (though we will modify this later by adding some pensioners and some of the working-age economically inactive into the petty-rentier class and by dividing the under-18s in rough proportion to the economically active classes). This would yield an ‘economically active’ category of those between 18 and 64 of 32.8 million.

Inconsistently with the calculations above, in June-August 2023 33.5 million people aged 16 and over were in employment.<sup>10</sup> I guess that the difference arises from 16-18s and over-65s who are in employment. (Just for an arbitrary example, I am retired but do a limited amount of part-time

teaching. Having retired from a fairly well-paid job I am *actually* living on investment income from my pension provider, which makes me a member of the petty rentier class.)

As of the third quarter 2023 there were 4.4 million self-employed,<sup>11</sup> or 13.4% of the economically active population. As of October 2024, of 5.5 million total *businesses*, 4.1 million have no employees, and another 1.2 million are ‘micro’ businesses having one-to-nine employees. Of 2.1 million actively trading registered companies, 920,000 did not employ anyone except the owner.<sup>12</sup> This information corroborates the ‘ballpark figure’ of about 13%-14% of the economically active population being, at least technically, in business for themselves.

How many of these are cases of “sham self-employment” - that is, where the ‘self-employed person’ is actually dependent on a single potential employer or arranger of jobs?<sup>13</sup> In 2020 Mark Harvey argued that the government’s figures of who was eligible to apply for self-employment support for the Covid lockdown showed that a million at least were cases of “sham self-employment”.<sup>14</sup> Certainly, the lockdown led to a sharp fall in reported self-employment, from five million to 4.2 million.<sup>15</sup>

## Employed middle

The Office of National Statistics’ ‘Labour Force Survey’ produces for July-September 2023 33.4 million in employment; excluding full-time students who have jobs, there are around 32 million. Of these 7.05 million (22%) are “higher managerial and professional”, 9.3 million (29%) are “lower managerial and professional”, 4.1 million (12.8%) are in “intermediate occupations”, 3.1 million (9.6%) are “small employers and own-account workers”, 1.9 million (5.9%) are “lower supervisory and technical”, three million (9.4%) are in “semi-routine occupations” and another three million (9.4%) in “routine occupations”.<sup>16</sup> The result would be 51% “professional and managerial”

plus another 9.6% small businesses, making the middle classes the very clear majority of UK society.

These figures are immediately suspect, in the first place because there is a flat inconsistency between 4.4 million self-employed or 4.1 million businesses with no employees, and only 3.1 million here. Secondly, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is recognised to be unreliable, due to massive falls in response rates, making the sampling methodology problematic. 600,000 workers reportedly went missing because of this problem ...<sup>17</sup>

Third, we need to consider how the categories are set up. It is notoriously the case (and was already observed by Adam Smith in *The wealth of nations*) that what counts as ‘skilled’, as opposed to ‘unskilled’, labour is highly arbitrary. The same goes for ‘professional’, contrasted with ‘skilled’ or ‘technical’. The LFS categories are based on the ‘National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification’, as revised in 2010.<sup>18</sup> This categorisation is explicitly designed to generate a classification congruent with the pollsters’ ‘social classes’ for marketing purposes, and it is based on JH Goldthorpe’s schema, which was from the outset based on the rejection of Marxist class analysis in favour of a Weberian version.<sup>19</sup>

For our present purposes, the problems are with ‘higher managerial and professional’, ‘lower managerial and professional’, and ‘lower supervisory and technical’ (the ‘intermediate’ category - “clerical, sales, service and intermediate technical occupations” - straightaway are clearly part of the working class in Marxist terms). In each of these three cases, the LFS/NS-SEC categories conflate *skilled* work with *managerial* authority over those below.

Further, both ‘higher professional’ and ‘lower professional’, so far as they are distinct from ‘technical’, are purely subjective categories, defined by reference to the prior use in ‘Registrar General’s Social Class’, as defined in 1921, and ‘Socio-economic groups’, as defined in 1961.

At the time of writing, the capitalist media and the government are engaged in a campaign of slander, using the methods traditionally employed against strikers - against resident doctors. The same methods have been used repeatedly against teachers. Both groups are ‘traditional professions’ for the purposes of the Goldthorpe schema; both have also been subject to efforts to cut the cost of training by deskilling - ‘teaching assistants’ and ‘physician associates’. ‘Professionals’, here, mutate into skilled workers from the point of view of capital, its state and its media.

Presumably, someone, who was better at working with the data than I am, could get hold of what underlies the LFS figures, could systematically disaggregate ‘professional’ from ‘managerial’ and as a result get a clearer sense of the issue. For a couple of examples, in 2025 there are 614,391 FTE teachers in UK state schools.<sup>20</sup> NHS England employed 741,747 “professionally qualified clinical staff” as of April 2025.<sup>21</sup>

Statista has for 2018 2.4 million employed “managers, directors and senior officials”. For 2018-19 there are 317,000 “finance managers and directors”; 244,000 “marketing and sales directors”; 63,000 “purchasing



managers and directors”; 204,000 “human resource managers and directors”; 107,000 “IT and telecommunications directors”; 132,000 general managers and directors - adding up to 1.1 million.<sup>22</sup> Statista also confirms that nurses and midwives count as ‘professionals’, as do a wide range of other NHS skilled staff.<sup>23</sup> In the ‘lower managerial and professional’ category, there are 172,000 office managers and 32,000 office supervisors.<sup>24</sup>

As I have said, I do not have the technical skills (or the time) to get into the raw data, disaggregate them and reconstruct them on the basis of Marxist categories. But what *would* the ‘Marxist categories’ be?

I have argued previously that the Ehrenreichs’ “professional-managerial class” is an amalgam.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand, the *managerial* class has authority over those below and, as Kautsky put it,<sup>26</sup> performs the functions of capital - that is, coordinating the work of organised groups of workers in objectively socialised production.<sup>27</sup>

By way of a very rough guesstimate, I think we can probably take Statista’s 2.4 million “managers, directors and senior officials” as the component of the LFS 7.05 million ‘higher managerial and professional’ that corresponds to this managerial class - 34% of the larger figure - and apply this percentage also to the LFS’s 9.3 million ‘lower managerial and professional’, giving 3.2 million; and its 1.9 million ‘lower supervisory and technical’, with 646,000; giving a total figure for managers and supervisors of 6.25 million - or 19.5% of the economically active population.

## Skilled

On the other hand, the remainder of these three LFS categories may be guesstimated at 12 million people or 37.9% of the economically active population. In terms of their apparent economic position, this large category is skilled workers: they are not in business for themselves, but work for wages (salaries), under personal capitalist or managerial authority. How they *self-identify* in class terms is more variable.

The background is that, as I have argued before, this group does not sell bare labour power, unlike unskilled and semi-skilled workers (the LFS’s 4.1 million in “intermediate occupations”, three million in “semi-routine occupations” and three million in “routine occupations” - in total 10.1 million or 32.8% of the economically active population). Their skills are assets - informal intellectual property rights - which can be parlayed into concessions from capital, which function as a form of ‘technical rents’. That is, as long as the collective skill monopoly is maintained (as Paul Demarty has argued<sup>28</sup>). These concessions may take the form of more money (including better pensions); of better working conditions (I can say from personal experience that it is more agreeable to work in a university than in a car factory ...); of lower-intensity supervision and direction; and, at the marginal edge, of low-value status-markers of social inclusion with the managerial class (executive toilets, university senior common rooms ...).

They may also be able to save from money concessions to acquire small-scale investment assets;<sup>29</sup> numerically most significantly, as I have already indicated, in the form of pensions saving. Or, if the circumstances are right, they may be able to move from employment into self-employment. The banks provided loan funding for dentists to bolt out of the NHS. The recent upshot is the displacement of the small dental practices created in this

wave by firms owned by private equity.<sup>30</sup> The dentists’ fate is thus like Engels in 1888 on the Irish peasantry: “A purely socialist movement should not be expected from Ireland for some time. The people first want to become small landowning peasants and, when they do, the mortgages will come along and ruin them once again ...”<sup>31</sup> Skilled building workers are able to move more fluidly between employment and self-employment.

The net effect is that this large category of skilled employees *necessarily overlaps between* the working class, on the one hand, and the employed middle class, on the other. At this point self-identification becomes important. Members of this category may self-identify in relation to their *employment relationship*, as workers, resulting in union activity and strikes; or they may self-identify in relation to their *assets*, as members of the middle class and individual ‘savers and strivers’ victimised by taxation and so on.

The 2023 British Social Attitudes Report finds that 52% of total population (as sampled) self-identify as working class, down from 58% in 1983. The primary drivers of this identification are education and income: “60% of people who left school with the equivalent of a GCSE or less identify as working class, compared with just 28% of those who went to university” - in this respect Dan Evans’ account of class as defined by education appears to ‘capture’ something about self-perception.<sup>32</sup> And “People in the lowest quartile of household incomes (52%) are also more likely than those in the highest quartile (32%) to identify as working class.”<sup>33</sup>

Taking all this in sum, and keeping in mind the level of guesswork involved, we can divide the economically active approximately into managers and supervisors (19.5%); small business operators (9.7%); skilled workers/skill-based employed middle class (37.9%) and semi-skilled and unskilled workers (32.8%). If all the skilled workers/skill-based employed middle class self-identified as working class, that would make the working class 70.7% of the *economically active population*. Obviously, they do not.

## Dependent

But in addition we now have to put back in the economically dependent or inactive. Starting with those of working age, as I already said, 1.7 million ‘home-makers’ fall to be categorised in class terms according to their breadwinner; the 2.8 million long-term sick and disabled again fall to be located in class position on the basis of family background or prior employment. The data do not provide (as far as I can see) enough detail to discriminate further.

The proportions among children and youth are affected by fertility differences between the classes. The most recent ONS data are for 2014.<sup>34</sup> Down to 2010 data were published by father’s occupation, while the 2014 data shows mother’s occupation. Megan Pope showed in a 2013 study of infant mortality that a “combined” approach using the higher of the two parental occupations produced substantially different results. The 2014 data shows 33% ‘unclassified’, which makes the dataset practically useless (reflected, I guess, in the failure of ONS to publish analogous data since then). The most recent old-style data that *appears* to be online is for 2008, so I have used this to guess percentages.<sup>35</sup>

The 1.1 million early retired (where this is not a result of long-term sickness) must fall into the class of petty rentiers. I have referred already to this class. I think the 1.1 million ‘other’ probably also fall into it: that is, people who live off

a moderate investment income, whether inherited or resulting from a windfall or a short period of high earning (like a sportsperson, an artist or a novelist who makes a killing in youth, but does not *carry on business* and would then be self-employed).

Life expectancy is substantially higher among the wealthier classes.<sup>36</sup> As of February 2024, 1.4 million people were in receipt of pension credit, which is thought to be 66% of those eligible, which would make 2.1 million eligible.<sup>37</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, as of May 2025 a little over one million pensioners were paying higher-rate income tax (exigible on incomes over £40,000 a year).<sup>38</sup> In FYE 2023 17% of pensioners were in the top fifth of the overall income distribution, and 13% in the bottom fifth; 49% were in the top half of the income distribution. 70% of pensioners received private pension income.<sup>39</sup> We should probably identify this 70% (9.03 million) as falling into the class of petty rentiers: those whose income depends primarily on investment performance.

Finally, the 2.9 million students in higher education occupy, like the professional/skilled/technical workers, an ambiguous class position. *In theory*, HE students are on the road to middle class occupations. At the same time, however, they are temporarily separated from the “dull compulsion of economic relations” that constantly reaffirms social order;<sup>40</sup> they stand in a relationship of subordination to the institution and only acquire direct managerial responsibilities over others as student union officials; and the process of training them in decision-making skills for managerial responsibilities involves exposing them to conflicting views, which means views outside the control of the press barons (which is why the press barons have been campaigning against HE for many years).<sup>41</sup>

## Significant shift

Putting these elements back in, we get a slight, but significant, shift in the picture of the classes that we had purely by estimating from the ONS ‘social class’ data on people in work. The relative size of the professional/technical/skilled worker sub-class comes down to 31%. Semi-skilled and unskilled workers come down to 25.3%. Petty rentiers at 16.3% are the third largest class group, followed by managers at 15%. The ‘classic’ small business petty bourgeoisie comes down to 8.1%, while HE students are 4.2% of the population.

On this basis the working class appears as the majority if the whole of the non-managerial employed professional/technical/skilled class is included: 56.3%. On the other hand, the ‘classic’ small business petty bourgeoisie, petty rentiers, and managers and supervisors who have actual authority over subordinates, add up to 39.4%. A minority, but by no means a small minority. The self-perception as working class reported in the British Social Attitudes survey, at 52%, is below the 56% produced by the analysis, but not radically below it.

The actual capitalist class proper of large employers and speculators who personally set money in motion for the circuit M-C-P-C’-M’ is missing from this picture. The main reason is that it is numerically too small to be separately visible in the ONS statistics. Secondly, the generality of incorporation means that this class appears in the statistics hidden among ‘senior managers’. And thirdly - a great deal of UK business is now actually US-owned, as Angus Hanton has recently argued.<sup>42</sup>

Hanton’s book places the UK economy and ‘British capital’ in

an international context, both of its subordination to US capital and in comparison with continental European capital. The present snapshot of classes in the mid-2020s poses related issues. The large middle class does not consist of peasants and artisans conducting production on a household scale; as Dan Evans argued, even the ‘classic’ small-business petty bourgeoisie consists largely of *fragments* of supply chains subordinated to monopolists. The petty rentiers and the managerial class are largely unproductive classes. How does the economy support them?

The issue is, in fact, by no means unique to these classes. In the next article in this series we will look at the distribution of employment - and find that a large proportion is in unproductive sectors, or sectors that depend on production elsewhere and subsidies. Britain’s place in the world will again turn out to be fundamental ●

mike.macnair@weeklyworker.co.uk

## Notes

1. D Evans *A nation of shopkeepers* London 2023, pp142-44.
2. Various references are available at thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2022/01/22/a-world-rate-of-profit-important-new-evidence; D Basu *et al.*, ‘World profit rates, 1960-2019’ *Review of Political Economy* Vol 37 (2025), pp92-107. Anonymous objections at unlearncon.medium.com/the-astonishingly-poor-empirics-of-the-tendency-of-the-rate-of-profit-to-fall-a9d062d0dc64 (anonymous witnesses are *prima facie* to be disregarded, but some of the substantive arguments may be worth considering).
3. www.icaew.com/insights/viewpoints-on-the-news/2025/may-2025/chart-of-the-week-uk-population. Here and below I have *generally* rounded to one decimal point of millions, but occasionally to two decimal points.
4. www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2023.
5. It is an inconvenience of the spreadsheet that it does not provide data for age 18 or below, which is both the legal age of majority and the school leaving age, and thus a more natural indicator of economic dependency.
6. In spite of recent increases in pensionable ages this is a reasonable rough proxy for the retired, since ‘early retirement’ has been used as a job-cutting measure for some time.
7. www.hesa.ac.uk/news/20-03-2025/he-student-statistics-2324-released.
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- ‘A Marxist critique of Weberian class analysis’ *Sociology* Vol 31 (1997), pp73-89.
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23. www-statista-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/statistics/778351/health-professionals-employed-uk.
24. www-statista-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/statistics/779758/individuals-employed-as-office-managers-and-supervisors-uk.
25. ‘American Blue Labour’ *Weekly Worker* April 15 2021 (weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1343/american-blue-labour); see also ‘Centrality of class’, June 3 2021 (weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1350/centrality-of-class-mike-macnair-replies-to-foppe-).
26. ‘Completely different foundations’ *Weekly Worker* June 26 2025 (weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1544/completely-different-foundations).
27. Pro-capitalist ideologues define the function of capital as that of the ‘entrepreneur’ - the innovator who finds a market gap and exploits it. This is merely ideological - and, so far as policy is made on this basis, tends to be *destructive* in effect, as, for example, in the UK water industry.
28. ‘Manufacturing consensus’ *Weekly Worker* September 2 2021 (weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1361/manufacturing-consensus).
29. An observation already made by Kautsky in *The dictatorship of the proletariat* [1918] against the franchise in the 1918 Soviet constitution: “Another clause excludes from the franchise everyone who has unearned income: for example, dividends on capital, profits of a business, rent of property. How big the unearned income must be which carries with it loss of the vote is not stated. Does it include the possession of a savings bank-book? Quite a number of workers, especially in the small towns, own a little house, and, to keep themselves above water, let lodgings” (www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1918/dictprole/ch07.htm).
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**CU 2025**

# Fighting spirit renewed

This year was dominated by the themes of communist unity and the likely opportunities following the launch of Corbyn's Your Party. Ian Spencer reports

Planning for CU 2025 took place against the background of the fusion talks between the CPGB, Talking About Socialism and the pro-party faction of the online journal, *Prometheus*. Coverage of this process in the *Weekly Worker* had stimulated a lot of interest from comrades in the UK and beyond.

A sizable delegation from the Communist Platform of the Netherlands attended. Some *Prometheus* comrades were also members of Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century, which split from the SWP after the comrade Delta scandal in 2013. However, not all the RS21 comrades had been through the SWP mill. Those who attended CU were comparatively young, not veterans. Politically they seemed to be on our wavelength. There were interesting contributions from the Spartacist League, which nowadays is far more open to actual discussion with other groups. Contributions were streamed online from the Marxist Unity Group in the USA and the Revolutionary Communist Organisation in Australia.

On the face of it, one would have expected a CU suffused with optimism - a herald of a growing, unified organisation that could take on the challenge of present times with vitality and fresh ideas. This was marred, somewhat, by the pre-CU decision of the leadership of TAS to withdraw from unity talks, in favour of looking for alliances with other groups and the opportunities offered by the new Corbyn party.

## Valuable

At an online meeting before CU, some TAS members expressed their disagreement with the idea of withdrawing from the Forging Communist Unity process prior to CU. Generally, the FCU discussions had taken place between the leaderships of the respective groups and CU would have been the first real opportunity for members of all three groups to get together and have their say.

Nevertheless, comrades Cat Rylance and Jack Conrad led a valuable discussion about the FCU process and why it appears to have failed on this occasion. One of the sub-themes of the week was the question of the 'culture' of the organisations in question. While this was typically directed at the CPGB, comrade Rylance made the point that this should not stand in the way of unity. After all, people had left TAS, and in at least one case been expelled, owing to its own internal culture. Comrade Conrad reiterated the point: forthright debate is an essential part of a healthy organisational culture. In contrast, those who were critical of the CPGB were apt to stress that the problem was not about 'politeness', but being politically smart about how discourse was framed, considering the relative inexperience of comrades new to the left.

Other sub-themes included the attitude that should be taken by communists to the 'middle classes', which entailed disentangling the Marxist understanding of class, compared to that of bourgeois sociology, which often portrays class in subjective terms.

CU was, of course, taking place against the background of the genocide in Palestine, an increasingly bellicose USA and a drive to war across the world, which will mean



From the Netherlands too

only austerity and slaughter for the working class in the death agonies of declining capitalism.

The second session of the first day was a highly pertinent discussion of 'War, peace and communist strategy', led by comrade Rida Vaquas, who gave a presentation of the importance of the demand for a popular militia - something which is included in the CPGB's *Draft programme*, but is often derided or dismissed as crazy by many opportunist left groups.

The evening - and indeed every day - saw a very welcome addition to CU: a cultural programme led by Tam Dean Burn. There were, throughout CU, readings from Bertolt Brecht's epic poetic rendition of the Marx-Engels *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>1</sup> Along with play readings and cultural discussion, the programme was as illuminating as it was entertaining. Highly memorable contributions to our cultural programme were made by Esther Leslie, Finn Iunker and Bill Maguire.

One of the great strengths of CU is the quality of the contributions, from experts in their fields, which help to aid understanding and contribute to the development of Marxist theory. One such discourse was from Michael Roberts, who looked at the world economy and the impact of the Trump presidency. This was followed by Marc Mulholland's analysis of class relations in 19th century Ireland and the problem of "reactionary democracy".

## Debate

Debate is, of course, central to CU and this year included the 'right of nations to self-determination'. Opening speakers were Ed Potts (TAS), Archie Woodrow (RS21) and Yassamine Mather (CPGB). Comrade Potts thought that the national struggle had exhausted itself nowadays and that countries were essentially "homogenous". Comrade Woodrow sharply disagreed. Comrade Mather pointed out, the national question must be placed in concrete historical circumstances, such as attempts to appeal to the 'national question' to dismember Iran. What followed was an excellent debate - most comrades thought that comrade Potts was badly mistaken.

On Saturday, returning to the theme of class, David Broder of *Jacobin* gave an illuminating account

of the far-right use of 'workerist' identity politics and its roots in Labourism. This was followed by Nick Wrack's 'Envisioning the communist future'. This was, in part, comrade Wrack's account of TAS withdrawing from FCU, but also included differences between TAS and the CPGB. This included the question of the transition from the lower to the higher form of communism and whether that would entail having to make alliances with the middle classes. Comrade Wrack, arguing that Marx and Engels used the terms 'socialism' and 'communism' interchangeably, said that we should not make concessions to petty bourgeois exploiters of labour.

In the debate, CPGB members argued that this is precisely the wrong time to pull out of the FCU process, as we might conceivably be working together in the newly constituted Corbyn party. Speaking as someone who had worked with comrade Wrack on the 'Why Marx?' project, I stated that his contribution was an attempt to recruit to a future grouping in Your Party, led by himself.

The continuity from the discussion around the transition from different phases in the move from capitalism to communism was taken up by an innovative presentation by comrade Ted Reese, who examined the transition to fully automated communism along with the concept of abundance.

## Palestine

Moshé Machover and Yassamine Mather analysed the continuing horror in Palestine, plus the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, Syria, Yemen and beyond. Comrade Machover made the crucial point that, while the pro-Israel lobby is undeniably powerful in the US, it is a mistake to assert that it is a case of the 'tail wagging the dog'. A central part of the pro-Israel lobby is the evangelical Christian right and, while Israel has its own interests, it is largely carrying out its policy at the behest of the US, without which it would be brought to a standstill. The US has effectively been the sponsor of Israel, especially since the 1967 Six Day War.

Comrade Mather observed that any aim of regime change in Iran can only take place if there is a potential alternative to the theocracy. While

the current regime is undeniably unpopular, given the choice between being dismembered by US imperialism and Iranian national identity, people will and do choose the latter, despite the fact that the regime is dictatorial and resolutely pro-capitalist.

Both comrades Mather and Machover stressed both the struggle against imperialism and an internationalist perspective for the workers of the Middle East as essential to bring an end to the genocide in Palestine. The fundamental aim must be the defeat of US imperialism, Israel's principal sponsor.

## Internationalism

On the question of communist unity, I do not think there was any dissent at CU on the need for a mass, *internationalist* communist party. The question of how we get there was another of our sub-themes. To this end, comrades Rylance of *Prometheus* and Joe Carman of the Marxist Unity Caucus (MUC) in RS21 took up the theme of how to take the project of a communist party forward. Comrade Conrad pointed out that the MUC has modelled itself on the Marxist Unity Group in the Democratic Socialists of America, but the difficulty we face in the UK is that there is as yet no equivalent organisation to the DSA.

This session was followed by a debate between Archie Woodrow, Mike Macnair and Cat Rylance on how to build a healthy communist culture. The debate featured many comrades sharing their perspectives and insights into how best to ensure a healthy environment in a communist organisation, facilitating growth and open discussion without losing sight of the aim of revolution.

Peter Kennedy of TAS presented a discussion on the distinction between socialism and capitalism (a theme that would be taken up again the next day). This was followed by another discussion on communists and the Corbyn party with Archie Woodrow and Tina Becker. There were valuable insights from both comrades into the likely working of this new formation and a keen understanding of the likely pitfalls it will face. It is our duty as communists to influence what may be one of the most significant political events of

the next few years. We know that the *Weekly Worker* is widely read on the left and this puts us in an important position when it comes to giving a lead. We need to promote the struggle for an open, democratic movement that can develop into a mass Communist Party.

Lawrence Parker gave a well-researched talk about whether or not we can distance ourselves from Stalinism. The CPGB has distinguished itself by an analysis of why the Russian Revolution was defeated and the impact that has had on world politics since.

We also must understand the present, particularly the global rightwing surge. This discussion was led by Lydia Apolinar of MUG and Kaspar van der Burgh of the Communist Platform of the Netherlands. The formal presentations of the day were concluded by an old friend of CU, Chris Knight, who with Camilla Power of the Radical Anthropology Group highlighted the communistic nature of early human society.

The penultimate day, featured a discussion on trans rights, this time with Roxy Hall of the RCO in Australia and Mike Macnair. The CPGB rightly defends the trans community in the face of rightwing attempts to create wedge issues..

Ian Wright, drawing on Marx's own profound interest in mathematics, provided a computer generated illustration of how the law of value works. His aim was not to prove that Marx was right. Rather that we need to critically take forward the 19th century science he used in *Capital*. This was followed by the climate scientist, Bill Maguire, and a grim warning that climate change was now irreversible. Things will be bad, but how bad is the question we face. Large parts of the world are in danger of becoming uninhabitable.

## My turn

I began the final day with a discussion of the challenges faced by one of the biggest groups of workers in the UK. NHS and adult social care workers constitute nearly three million workers, and this will be a key battleground for the working class in defending the gains of the post-war period, in an era where more and more resources are poured into the arms industry.

Jack Conrad concluded what had been an exhilarating CU with a roundup of the essential demands of a mass Communist Party from a Marxist perspective. This included not just a critique of other groups, but an important understanding of the nature of the gains of the working class in the post-war period and the nature of highly contested proto-socialist forms. Ours is an epoch of transition to socialism, where what the working class needs is democracy.

CU began with what might seem like the disappointing failure of the FCU process. But I came away without pessimism or disappointment. Discussion was generally informed by Marxism at its most scientific, amongst comrades determined to forge communist unity - a project too important to be deflected by this or that group. FCU is dead! Long live communist unity! ●

## Notes

1. This is available in translation by Darko Suvin here: [darkosuv.in.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ds-manifesto-transl-1-19.pdf](https://darkosuv.in.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ds-manifesto-transl-1-19.pdf).



## REVIEW

# Abomination of imperialist war

Mark O'Connor (director) *Amongst the wolves* (currently streaming on Prime Video)

**A**mongst all genres of film, teleplay or video there are often political cadences and subtleties beyond the obvious, even in those works some might dismiss as superficially too violent, too explicit, too this or too that. If we are looking to liberate humanity, then examining critically the wider culture must be part of that remit.

In *Amongst the wolves*, director Mark O'Connor enables us to see part of one reality faced by someone adrift in society - someone at the sharp end forced into action to keep safe those near to him. Danny (Luke McQuillan) is one such person, homeless in Dublin. Remaining in the family home, his ex-partner, Gill (Jade Jordan), prevents him seeing his young son, Tadgh (Manco O'Connor): this is ostensibly due to his negligence in causing a domestic fire that left the youngster with chronic breathing problems.

We share Danny's intense, short flashbacks of his time in Afghanistan during the occupation, triggered as they are randomly by loud noises and electronic games. Although which forces he was with are not specified, he recounts one tragic event, when a little girl had half her leg blown off by an improvised explosive device (IED); she subsequently died. It seems therefore that he might have been a member of the Irish Defence Forces (Oglaigh na hEireann) in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2012 to deal with IEDs (its Ranger Wing was also deployed to Afghanistan as part of the UN stabilisation force). Alternatively, Danny could have been one of the British army's Royal Irish Regiment recruits from across all of Ireland (Irish citizens are recruited to British army regiments on the same basis as British citizens).

As we know, and as Danny clearly does, homelessness holds numerous dangers for rough sleepers. One night he is attacked by three young thugs, who destroy his tent. Walking aimlessly in the cold, he warms himself at a fire in the woods; the fire's owner, teenager Will (Daniel Fee), pulls a penknife on him. But Danny disarms and makes peace with Will, who is terrified and explains he is hiding from a gang led by Power (Aidan Gillen) after losing some of its drugs. Will becomes Danny's surrogate son. Days later, Power finds Will in a chippy and pours salt in a hand wound; but Danny arrives and stands up to Power, forcing him to leave Will alone for the moment.

Thanks to their CCTV system, gang members see Albanian runner Marko (John Dalessandro) stealing drugs; Power forces Will to go with his thugs and throw sulphuric acid into Marko's face, on pain of Power's thugs menacing Will's mother (Laura Murray) at her home. At the camp fireside with Danny that evening, Will fesses up full of remorse. Next day, Danny helps Will collect enough to pay back Power all he owes and takes it in person; but Power will never let him go, demanding that Will's late father's alleged debts be paid too - €15,000 plus 'accumulating' interest. Danny warns Power he will come after him if he does not let up on Will.

Unsurprisingly, Power soon raises the stakes: Will's family dachshund is killed and hanged in the woods near his tent. Will is distraught, but, sensing danger, Danny calls for help from Kate (Louise Bourke), a homelessness charity worker, who gives the lads keys to a one-room flat for a few days as a hideout. Danny gets the bad news that a court hearing will decide who has custody of his son, Tadgh, taking it upon himself to



Mark O'Connor: bringing it home

illicitly abduct the boy, only to have the Gardaí grab him back. Once more in paternal mode, Danny rescues Will from hypothermia, but going to Kate's proves to be a wrong move, as she has called the cops. They escape capture by scooting out the back.

In family court some days later, Danny speaks up and the case is adjourned for a week for reports. Back at the campsite, everything has been burnt to a crisp. Will goes to visit his mother, but is grabbed by Power's thugs: they drive a six-inch nail through Will's hand and start drilling into his leg. Danny turns up and uses his military skills to put down the three thugs one by one. He carries the unconscious Will out of harm's way. Power drives up, but leaves when he cannot find Danny or Will. Back in town, Danny shoots Power dead with a nail gun through the driving seat.

But now Danny is distraught and disarmed, surrounded by remembered battle sounds of explosion and gunfire, when the Gardaí roll up and put him under arrest: he does not resist in the slightest. Much later, Kate visits Danny in a secure psychiatric facility, telling him that she will bring Tadgh to visit soon. Danny's memories of Tadgh trying to wake him up during the traumatic home fire continue to invade his thoughts; the impression is that this will continue. Danny may be the avenging angel at the rough end of life in Dublin. But his suffering - hinted at during the film, while not overplayed - indicates something deeper: witness his eventual fate as a patient at a psychiatric institution.

## Military role

Many men and women join the military for a career and more particularly as an escape from poor prospects in civil society due to poverty or insufficient educational qualifications - or simply a lack of employment where they live, even if they are reasonably well qualified. It used to be a truism that British army recruiting at squaddie level was based on the 'sandwich approach': recruiters would only take the meat of the sandwich, refusing those too well educated as being potential troublemakers and those very poorly educated and of perceived low IQ as being incapable of carrying out tasks in the technically advanced armed forces of today.

As of early 2025, the regular British army (ie, not counting reservists) is 67,107, the lowest it has been since the early 1800s; the Royal Navy total is around 28,000 and the airforce nearly 30,000, which are historic lows in both services. Without saying it in so many words, the armed forces will take almost anyone these days, putting them in

harm's way in the manner of World War I generals.

Whatever intellectual level soldiers, sailors or airforce personnel might be considered officially to exhibit or achieve, when placed in intolerable or horrific situations, they react as human beings must. Mental scars aplenty join the physical scars and serious permanent impairment following tours of duty in war zones. Several tours in Afghanistan bring a negative harvest for many. The physical results are to be seen on our streets: some maimed veterans are righteously bold enough to wear their prosthetics exposed, as if to say, 'See what I did for the army?'

## Help for Heroes

Of course, the British state and its armed-forces high-ups are inclined to try to forget those injured physically and mentally in their service. That, however, has been the state and its minions' response since the Napoleonic wars: those injured answering the call of 'duty' are not their responsibility. War veterans begging on the streets were to be seen until the aftermath of World War I. Present-day state responses to the injuries that its wars cause are far below what is required, showing persistent lack of responsibility. No, in recent decades it has been left to pro-nationalist charities such as Help for Heroes and friends and families of the injured to take up the slack; the bloodstained British state could not be further removed from caring about those whose lives it wastes in war or those who served after they come back from its wars. However, it is a state that is more than happy to give pomp and ceremony to the coffins of those who die in conflict, deeply cynical in its use of the dead in propagandising for more to be killed and injured in its future wars.

Even more unfortunately, Irish Defence Forces personnel who are injured while on active duty come under a more limited and less formalised system than elsewhere. Their legal right to compensation is limited to negligence or unsafe conditions, as if they were civilians, whether injured in the course of their duties or suffering subsequent psychological injuries. And, while injured personnel get treated by the Defence Forces Medical Corps or referred to civilian hospitals, ongoing care, rehabilitation and assessments are provided haphazardly long-term. In addition, support structures are less centralised than the UK or the USA. It leads to many injured personnel seeking assistance via legal channels or veteran advocacy groups in order to gain their entitlements or challenge decisions made against them.

But conflict these days for the

British state is as the USA's satrap. If the US government and state make it clear they want British assistance in its military actions, metaphorically barking, 'Jump to it!', the British government unashamedly agrees, with its version of 'How high?' They care as little about the ordinary 'squaddie', 'bootneck' or 'matelot' as they do about the working class majority at home (or those among 'enemy' populations whose lives they end or ruin in attempting to subdue all protest at US hegemonic rule throughout the world).

*Among the wolves* brings it all home by means of a fictional story bearing important truths: a veteran who illustrates the fate of many more in all of Ireland, as well as in Britain. Veterans of various wars of British imperialism who have been or are currently in prison are out of proportion to their numbers in the British population, according to advocacy groups - a figure as high as 10% has been cited. The proportion of ex-service personnel in the UK population as a whole is around 3%, which is mirrored by the official figures for prisoners. The Irish Prison Service does not currently publish data on the number or proportion of prisoners with prior military service, nor does the Central Statistics Office or the Irish Defence Forces track how many veterans end up incarcerated.

When viewing this film, bear in mind the background suffering that is expressed so well by its key character. Its elements of barbarity are small beer when viewed side by side with the death-dealing abomination of wars waged by and on the behest of the US hegemon and its slave states around the world - the lowest of the low being Britain's grovelling statesmen. Their crimes are paraphrased in the living hell that members of their all too loyal armed forces personnel so often have to experience. ●

Séamus Ó Muadaigh

## Notes

1. The Republic of Ireland does not belong to any formal military alliances or mutual defence pacts, with a longstanding policy of 'military neutrality'. Nevertheless, Ireland joined the Nato 'Partnership for Peace' in 1999 and works with Nato on peacekeeping, crisis management and interoperability training.

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## What we fight for

■ Without organisation the working class is nothing; with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

■ There exists no real Communist Party today. There are many so-called 'parties' on the left. In reality they are confessional sects. Members who disagree with the prescribed 'line' are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

■ Communists operate according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members should have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent factions.

■ Communists oppose all imperialist wars and occupations but constantly strive to bring to the fore the fundamental question - ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

■ Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class and progressive parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of national sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle, 'One state, one party'.

■ The working class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capital is weakened and lacks coordination.

■ Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is no dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

■ Capitalism in its ceaseless search for profit puts the future of humanity at risk. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and crisis. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally.

■ The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth and power to be taken away by a parliamentary vote.

■ We will use the most militant methods objective circumstances allow to achieve a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, a united, federal Ireland and a United States of Europe.

■ Communists favour industrial unions. Bureaucracy and class compromise must be fought and the trade unions transformed into schools for communism.

■ Communists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, combating racism and chauvinism, and the struggle for peace and ecological sustainability are just as much working class questions as pay, trade union rights and demands for high-quality health, housing and education.

■ Socialism represents victory in the battle for democracy. It is the rule of the working class. Socialism is either democratic or, as with Stalin's Soviet Union, it turns into its opposite.

■ Socialism is the first stage of the worldwide transition to communism - a system which knows neither wars, exploitation, money, classes, states nor nations. Communism is general freedom and the real beginning of human history.

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# weekly Worker

## Capitulating to Trump and Netanyahu

# An opposition that serves

Iran's Reform Front ignores the ongoing war and genocide in Gaza, the threats posed by the US and Israel and effectively buys into western propaganda over the nuclear question, argues **Yassamine Mather**

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently affirmed that he “very much” identifies with the idea of “Greater Israel” in an interview, during which he accepted an amulet symbolising the ‘promised land’ from former rightwing Knesset member Sharon Gal. His statement drew immediate condemnation from Arab states, which see it as a direct threat to their sovereignty.

The idea of a “Greater Israel” is not new: it is the ideological backbone of Zionism. In its most extreme form, it demands expansion from Palestine across Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia - an imperialist fantasy masquerading as divine destiny. A narrower version focuses on the territories stolen in 1967: the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. Even though Sinai was returned to Egypt under pressure, Israel clung to the Golan Heights and has relentlessly expanded settlements across the West Bank. Religious Zionists dress this project in biblical passages, but it is nothing more than colonial theft, backed by US weapons and capital. Theodor Herzl’s imperial dream of a Jewish homeland “from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates” was never about safety or survival: it was about domination and displacement.

Israel’s borders have always been drawn in blood. After the 1948 Nakba, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war violently expanded the Zionist state. Conquests became a holy cause for nationalist and religious settlers alike. In the 1970s, the so-called Movement for Greater Israel emerged as the political vanguard of expansionism, demanding permanent annexation and mass settlement. Although that movement formally dissolved, its politics became mainstream, permeating Israeli military and political institutions. The project lives on today in the settler militias, the far-right ministers in Netanyahu’s cabinet and the US diplomats who excuse every new war crime.

Since 2022, Netanyahu’s government has escalated its colonial rhetoric to unprecedented levels. Finance minister Bezalel Smotrich openly calls for Israel’s reach to extend to Damascus, denies Palestinian nationhood altogether, and stands proudly in front of maps erasing Jordan. Other ministers push for the full annexation of Gaza, while Israeli soldiers openly wear patches depicting maps of ‘Greater Israel’. These are not harmless symbols - they are blueprints for conquest, apartheid and mass displacement.

### New settlements

On the ground, Israel continues to build settlements, particularly in the E1 corridor near east Jerusalem and Ma’ale Adumim. This strategy fragments the West Bank, erodes the prospect of a viable Palestinian state and cements a one-state reality of apartheid. Governments - namely, those of Europe, Canada and Australia - routinely label these settlements



Funeral for two-month-old victim of Israel’s 12-day war

as illegal under international law. Yet Israel proceeds, armed with US dollars and protection at the UN, entrenching a Greater Israel future built on Palestinian dispossession.

Donald Trump has bolstered this trajectory. His administrations have constantly legitimised Israel’s theft. His first administration recognised Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, relocated the US embassy, endorsed the legality of West Bank settlements and recognised Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

In February 2025, Trump went further - proposing to transform Gaza into the “Riviera of the Middle East” by expelling up to two million Palestinians. This was not ‘redevelopment’: it was the language of ethnic cleansing, dressed up as investment. Netanyahu praised the scheme as “remarkable”, proving once again that for Israel, Palestinian life is expendable, so long as expansion continues. Despite outrage from around the world, Israeli leaders embraced the idea, certain of their US shield.

That is why repetition of Netanyahu’s call for “complete occupation” of Gaza is not rhetorical exaggeration - it is the culmination of decades of policy. From the 1967 war and beyond, Israel has sought to crush Gaza. Today, settler movements demand annexation and colonisation, branding it the “unfinished business” of Zionism. As Gadi Algazi reminds us, colonial wars do not begin or end with declarations:

From historian Henk Wesseling, who specialises in Dutch colonialism, I learned that colonial wars have no clear beginning or end. I’m quoting from memory, so I may be adding a bit of my own. They don’t start with declarations of war, nor do they end with celebratory ceremonies. Don’t think of them as stories with clear beginnings and ends. Think of them as continual processes in which people are killed and lose their homes, even during ‘peace’.

Many continue to be killed, wounded and displaced after ‘the war’ ends.

A colonial war is a violent social process that cannot be classified as either ‘war’ or ‘peace’ in the traditional sense. Wars can be waged with bulldozers, and settlements can be carried out with tanks. There can be pauses, but the ongoing process can radically escalate at any moment. These wars have partial interruptions, but that does not mean they end. When they flare up, those who aren’t usually affected wake up and discover that the war has been ongoing all along.<sup>1</sup>

Netanyahu’s rhetoric envisages war without end. If Hamas is destroyed, Islamic Jihad emerges; if it is eliminated, resistance continues through guerrilla tactics, stones or knives. Each act of defiance renews the justification for further occupation. Settlers, rebranded as ‘residents’, will live under constant threat, perpetuating the cycle of violence. For Palestinians, this signals dispossession and annihilation; for Israelis, it means generations bound to a war machine.

### Regional tensions

Meanwhile, tensions with Iran escalate. Two months after Israel’s 12-day war, Iran grapples with an economic crisis brought about by US sanctions and the threat of renewed UN sanctions through the ‘snapback mechanism’ of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (nuclear deal). Already isolated, Iran’s trade relies on covert channels and limited partners, such as China and Russia. Last week, Netanyahu attempted to appeal directly to the Iranian people, but his efforts often totally misfire. Recently, he displayed a book by Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji during a speech, apparently unaware that Ganji has long denounced Israel. The stunt underscored the disconnect between Netanyahu’s messaging and regional realities.

The Reform Front coalition of 27 activist groups in Iran issued a statement outlining the serious risks and threats facing the country, declared that establishing national reconciliation and abandoning hostility at home and abroad is the only path to saving the country and a golden opportunity for change and a return to the people. To exit the crisis and prevent activation of the snapback mechanism, the Reform Front called for comprehensive and direct negotiations with the US, expressed readiness for the voluntary suspension of uranium enrichment and acceptance of International Atomic Energy Agency oversight in exchange for the complete lifting of sanctions.

At the same time, this current urged all national political forces that support “peaceful and non-violent reform, along with all decision-making institutions committed to the rights of the people, to abandon artificial and fruitless divisions and rally around national interests”.

According to the statement,

The 12-day war ... showed that Iran is determined and capable of defending its territorial integrity. But it also revealed that continuing on this path - without rebuilding national trust and opening constructive engagement with the world - will impose heavy human, financial and psychological costs on the nation ...

Under these circumstances, the threat of the European Troika activating the ‘snapback mechanism’ is very real and imminent. The return of Iran’s nuclear file to Chapter VII of the UN Charter would restore UN sanctions and bring about a deeper stagnation than the consequences of the recent war. This return would also provide international legitimacy for a future war against Iran under the label of a ‘threat to peace’ ...

Today, at this historic

crossroads, three paths lie before the people and the state:

A. Continuing the current situation, with a fragile ceasefire and an uncertain future.

B. Repeating the pattern of the past 22 years - tactical negotiations to buy time without addressing the roots of the crisis.

C. A courageous choice: national reconciliation and abandoning hostility at home and abroad, to reform governance and return to the principle of popular sovereignty ...

The Reform Front of Iran, based on the strategy of reform from within, considers national reconciliation and its results to be the only way to save the country and a golden opportunity for change and return to the people. Without deep structural reforms, however, reconciliation and general amnesty would become nothing more than a political show.<sup>2</sup>

### From within

The Reform Front calls for national reconciliation and structural change through liberalisation (amnesty, freeing prisoners, ending repression), direct talks with the US and normalisation of relations, voluntary limits on nuclear enrichment under IAEA oversight in exchange for lifting sanctions, removing the military from politics and the economy, reducing the state’s security-heavy approach, and freeing the economy from oligarchic control to ensure equal opportunities.

Not that we should have expected much from these groups, but the statement and the ‘road map’ on offer suffer from a striking detachment from present realities. Focusing narrowly on internal reforms and nuclear negotiations, the statement ignores the ongoing war and genocide in Gaza, the threats posed by the US and Israel, and the deeply entrenched project of ‘Greater Israel’ that openly aims to erase Palestinian nationhood and redraw regional borders.

In framing Iran’s negotiations with the US and the suspension of nuclear enrichment as the central path to “salvation”, the Reform Front effectively buys into western propaganda that portrays Iran’s crisis as primarily nuclear, rather than geopolitical and colonial. This reduces the conflict to a technical dispute over uranium, while sidelining Israel’s expansionism, its military aggression and its occupation policies that are the true sources of instability in the region.

By ignoring these realities, such proposals are disconnected from the urgent struggles facing both Iran and the broader Middle East •

### Notes

1. [www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=24163539396628755](https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=24163539396628755).
2. [kar-online.com/104846](https://kar-online.com/104846).