

# weekly worker



**Zack Polanski wants to 'save Britain' by making it 'fair' and 'more equal'. Genuine socialists want to overthrow capitalism**

- Letters and debate
- Tory ICE plans
- Australian Marxists
- Italy's Gaza strikes

No 1556 October 9 2025

Towards a mass Communist Party

Free to Palestine marchers

£1/€1.10

**'FIRST PHASE' OF TRUMP'S PLAN IS A  
CONTINUATION OF THE ZIONIST PLAN TO  
COLONISE THE WHOLE OF PALESTINE  
... KEEP ON PROTESTING**



# LETTERS



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

## Zionist crimes

The president of Israel, Isaac Herzog, has recently complained about a “worldwide rise in anti-Semitism”, specifically “following Hamas’s brutal attack of October 7 2023”. He doesn’t explain how an “attack” on people who were predominantly Israeli/Jewish could of it itself stimulate “worldwide hatred of Jews”. That makes no rational or logical sense.

In reality, the events of October 7 resulted from a mass breakout by Hamas and other military formations from the Gaza concentration camp, quickly overrunning Israeli military positions, which appeared woefully unprepared. Slightly under 1,200 Israelis were killed, including 379 active members of the Israeli security forces. Of course, most of the Israeli population have undergone military training and many have immediate access to firearms.

In violent contrast, since October 7, Israeli security forces have already killed (‘massacred’ is a better word) at least 100,000 Palestinians, the vast majority of whom have been unarmed civilians - a large proportion, of course, have been young children.

Israel continues to further subject the Gazan population to deliberate mass starvation and denial of other basic necessities, such as clean water, basic sanitation and medical help. They have deliberately targeted and murdered medical personnel - who have, incredibly bravely, attempted to provide vital help to Palestinians under violent occupation - and journalists, to prevent any semblance of objective reporting.

Have the Israeli security services ever used Yom Kippur or any other Jewish religious day or period to stop their ongoing massacring and murder of innocent civilians? Have they ever respected the religious festivals, days or special periods in either the Christian or Muslim calendars to pause their ongoing mass murders and general repression of the Palestinian people? Would it really have made much difference if they had, materially or even morally?

Of course, any and all hatred of people who happen to be Jewish, whether ethnically, religiously, culturally or self-identified, is unacceptable, should be condemned without hesitation and combatted, wherever it occurs. However, what we have really seen a “worldwide rise” in is deep revulsion and utter condemnation of the Israeli state - especially in its response to October 7, but also the whole of their violent and cruel displacement and oppression of the Palestinian people, which started with the creation of the settler-colonial state of Israel in 1948, and saw a further intensification with the 1967 war and Israeli military occupation of the remaining parts of Palestine - Gaza and the West Bank (amounting to just 22% of the original Mandate Palestine) - the seizure of the then strategically important Syrian territory of the Golan Heights and of the Egyptian Sinai.

We have also seen over the years repeated brutal and savage Israeli military invasions of its Arab neighbours, especially Lebanon, and either actual or effective occupation of their land. It is an open secret that Israel has illegally developed weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons and delivery systems, in order to threaten and intimidate its neighbours. It continues to carry out overt military strikes and only slightly more covert acts of terrorism, including mass bombings and targeted

assassinations (and with increasingly open impunity and arrogance) against its near and not so near neighbours.

Given that none of the Arab and other countries in the Middle and Near East have nuclear or any other types of weapons of mass destruction, which might act as any form of deterrent, given Israel’s track record of what increasingly appears to be a rogue terrorist state, would it really be beyond the realm of possibility that Israel will actually use a nuclear weapon on one of its neighbours within the next five or 10 years. It is clear from their actions and words, the leaders of the Israeli state regard Arab and other eastern peoples as ‘sub-human’. Would they really blanch at wiping out a further few hundred thousand such people if that radically strengthened the intimidatory and threatening power of their state?

The relative success, it has to be said, of the Israeli state and its western backers in perversely and ridiculously managing to equate opposition to the actions, policies and behaviours of the Israeli state - plus support for the basic national, political and basic human rights of the Palestinian people - with ‘anti-Semitism’ does need to be openly challenged and combatted.

The great majority of those worldwide who strongly condemn Israel’s occupation, repression and indeed attempted genocide of the Palestinian people are in no way whatsoever ‘anti-Semitic’ in the sense of that term meaning ‘feeling hatred against people who are Jewish simply because they are Jewish’. Indeed, their pro-Palestinianism and anti-Israeli-ism is often strongly motivated by the deepest humanitarian values and principles and rejection of any and all forms of racism, bigotry and oppression of all peoples of any and all ethnicities.

But if the “worldwide rise” in the revulsion and condemnation of the state of Israel does contain some degree of actual anti-Semitism, surely those who have peddled the ‘criticisms of Israel equals anti-Semitism’ nonsense have a major responsibility here. If the mass, democratic, pro-Palestinian demonstrations and support, together with condemnations of the appalling conduct and actions of the Israeli state, are all attacked under the attempted cover of being ‘anti-Semitic’, then it is not really surprising that this demagoguery may itself generate some degree of actual anti-Semitism.

This is not really helped by the state of Israel declaring it to be the state of all Jewish people worldwide. Of course, many Jewish people around the world would not subscribe to this supremacist concept or even positively identify with the state of Israel.

Actual anti-Semitism anywhere and at any time is obviously reprehensible and needs to be condemned where it actually takes place, but I think it is those who have peddled the ‘anti-Israel equals anti-Semitism’ nonsense who find themselves hoisted on their own petards here.

**Andrew Northall**  
Kettering

## Rosenbergs info

Gaby Rubin’s otherwise great article on the PBS documentary regarding the Rosenbergs has one factual error and another by omission (‘McCarthyite secrets and lies’ October 2).

Firstly, the children of the Rosenbergs did not establish the Rosenberg Foundation. They set up the Rosenberg Fund for Children (RFC), which I financially support and encourage others to do as well. Robert Meeropol, the son of Ethel and Julius, founded it, while their granddaughter, Jennifer, oversees the foundation today. As the article touches on, the RFC states how it “was established

to provide for the educational and emotional needs of children whose parents have suffered because of their progressive activities and who, therefore, are no longer able to provide fully for their children.”

That being said, I’ve always felt uncertain about the RFC’s campaign to exonerate Ethel, which was ignored by the Biden administration during its last days in office. Personally, I believe that, even if Ethel had been some kind of evil communist who gave away to the Soviets the secrets of the bomb, I wouldn’t consider that criminal from the perspective of the working class - nothing to warrant exoneration there.

Finally, the article misses a chance to recommend Anne Sebba’s biography, *Ethel Rosenberg: an American tragedy*. On the RFC website, Robert Meeropol states: “[Sebba] writes from a feminist perspective [and about] women who have been wronged and misperceived. This is perhaps the perfect person to write [the book]. It’s not an authorised biography, but it is the only literary work about my mother that does her life justice. I can’t say higher praise.”

I highly recommend checking out the book and the RFC.

**C Duran**  
Chicago

## YP bans?

We have had numerous local Your Party organisations formed spontaneously around the country. I assume their members will join ‘Our Party’ from the inaugural conference. This is a natural development from the grassroots nature of the party.

You cannot be a member of any other party, according to Jeremy Corbyn. Carla Roberts suggests the intended exclusion of other parties may reflect on Karie Murphy’s desire to keep out Marxist sects (‘Civil war continues’ September 25). I am more concerned about Karie Murphy herself, and other insiders manipulating the preparations for conference and undermining Zarah Sultana’s instinctive preference for open and accountable democracy.

There is an impression of a clique around JC. He allowed himself to be badly advised as Labour leader. I think this shows him to be unsuited for leadership this time around.

I am also concerned about Zarah Sultana’s attraction to identity politics. This distracts our appeal from working class issues. There are plenty of vital women’s issues - from domestic abuse to rape - without being drawn into intra-feminist controversies, such as those around self-identity - look at the harm this did to the Scottish National Party.

I certainly do not want us to be taken over by a Marxist sect or a Momentum mark two. But they give themselves away as soon as they mention ‘the masses’. They cannot drop the jargon.

We want to provide a home for the millions who have lost faith in the cynical careerists in parliament, especially the unorganised working class. I am waiting for a leader to emerge from conference. We need more open and inclusive debate around the issues - more mutual respect, less ego, less infighting. Let’s save our fire for the right.

**Alan Faith**  
email

## Leeds YP

The following motion, headed ‘For a democratic socialist party’, has just been agreed unanimously at a meeting of supporters of Your Party in Leeds:

“If we want Your Party to be a vehicle for democratising society, work and everyday life, we must democratise Your Party in its structures and internal culture.

■ We oppose secretive, self-appointed leaderships who do not submit

themselves to a democratic mandate and promote their positions through bureaucratic manoeuvring instead of open political debate.

■ The way Your Party has organised itself nationally so far has been neither democratic nor transparent. Openness and transparency at the top is essential for a truly member-controlled party.

■ For democracy to be effective, rank-and-file members must understand why things are happening the way they are in the party.

■ For democracy to be effective, rank-and-file members must have the freedom to formally and openly organise, and the freedom to openly argue for their positions. Mechanisms must exist in which they can argue for their positions to become democratically agreed policy.

■ To enable freedom of speech, organisation and genuine member control, Your Party must be a single unitary party, not an umbrella group or federation of existing organisations or groups of elected officials.

■ While the founding conference arrangements appear to be settled, we feel it is important to approach it critically and continue to advocate for the most democratic structures possible

To these ends, we support the following:

■ We believe local Your Party groups should be the building blocks of a national party, and should be empowered to elect their own delegates, based on local debate and democratically agreed priorities.

■ We believe national conferences should be the highest decision-making body of the party.

■ We do not believe that elected officials should have any more decision-making power than any other rank-and-file member. Elected officials should be open to having the whip removed by members at the relevant level and face mandatory reselection.

■ We believe in the freedom to form temporary or permanent open factions and caucuses within the party. We believe in a model of collective leadership, elected by the widest possible layer of members. We believe that Your Party should engage in all arenas of struggle for a socialist society, including in workplaces, neighbourhoods and social movements. We do not believe elections should be prioritised over these other areas.

■ We believe that the party should be a vehicle for socialism, a society and economy that is run by and for the working class in all its diversity. Socialism, anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism should be enshrined in Your Party’s constitution.

■ We believe the struggle against oppression in all its forms (racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia) is essential to the struggle for socialism. Political education should be a key component of Your Party’s work.

We call on our elected Leeds Steering Group to:

■ Publish and promote this statement.

■ Reach out to other Yorkshire Your Party groups and attempt to organise YP supporters on the points above.

■ To assist in organising a Yorkshire-wide meeting on the basis of the above as points of unity, in order to advocate for these shared goals at the upcoming regional assemblies.”

**Lynn Jackson**  
email

## Class dictatorship

Tony Clark is at it again - he just does not understand the meaning of the term, ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. He writes: “A dictatorship, by its very nature, is unaccountable to an elected body. If it is accountable, it is not a dictatorship, and therefore the term would be incorrect for describing

working class, socialist rule, in the absence of an emergency situation” (Letters, October 2)

While Marxists are totally opposed to the dictatorship of a tiny elite, we do favour the ‘dictatorship’ of the overwhelming majority. In other words, we are talking about *class rule*. Take ‘bourgeois democratic’ states like the UK and USA. Yes, the working class has won a whole series of democratic rights and made other gains, but, at the end of the day, these are limited by the needs of the bourgeoisie. In other words, it is the operation of capital which determines the way forward for bourgeois governments: it guides, restricts or modifies every policy they adopt. That is why it is reasonable to describe capitalist rule as a means of ensuring the *dictatorship* of the bourgeoisie.

In other words, for as long as social classes continue to exist, governments of any class will impose measures to limit the power of the enemy class. Thus, immediately after any working class revolution, for as long as capitalist production still exists, in however limited a form, we will need to ensure that our own collective interests, not those of the bourgeoisie, determine the way forward. That is why the class which forms the overwhelming majority of the population will have to impose its ‘dictatorship’ over the tiny bourgeois minority.

But we must do that *in a democratic way*: the entire population will elect representatives, who will debate and vote for the appropriate measures - irrespective of the opposition of the bourgeoisie or any other class minority. That is why the Bolsheviks aimed for the establishment of a “*democratic dictatorship* of the proletariat and peasantry” - the rule of the majority, as opposed to that of the minority of capitalists and landowners.

**Peter Manson**  
London

## Autocratic SUtR

The latest moves by Stand Up to Racism North-East, show increasing autocratic rule from above (essentially the Socialist Workers Party and friends). Activists and even whole branches have been unilaterally removed from SUtR WhatsApp structures and new ‘guidelines’ imposed to restrict debate.

This follows a stand by many rank-and-file activists and community groups for a blockade of the fascist Ukip ‘Mass deportations now’ march in Newcastle on September 27. This was opposed by SUtR NE by making allegations of “sectarian” splitters and squadism.

The official report by NE organiser Rob bigs up the rally at the Monument. There was a huge turnout, with its 27 picked speakers, well away from the fascists it claims to have stopped. Somehow the report forgot to mention the hundreds of activists who blockaded the fascists in the street called Side, then at the asylum hotel that Ukip planned to besiege. Fortunately lots of people left the Monument to join the action, which was also ignored in the report.

The day was a massive defeat for both Ukip and Tommy Robinson’s new Advance UK party, thanks to the actual activists, and the pathetically low turnout by Ukip and Advance. There have been some heated words following the Newcastle event, and SUtR’s response is simple: clamp down even harder on dissent. The whole north-east region of SUtR is in turmoil.

This is the time to create a new anti-racist and anti-fascist movement - not only there, but across the whole of Britain.

**Alan Theasby**  
Middlesbrough

## ANTI-ZIONISM

# Uses and abuses of murder

As Israel's popularity in the west craters, Sir Keir Starmer and the entire establishment cynically use the attack on Manchester synagogue to abuse and further criminalise protest against genocide, argues **Paul Demarty**

Last week's assault on a Manchester synagogue - timed to coincide with the Yom Kippur holy day - quite understandably led to a shocked public reaction.

A man of Syrian origin - Jihad al-Shamie - drove his car into a crowd of worshippers, and then began stabbing people. Several were injured, and one was killed. Police shot al-Shamie dead, along with one other worshipper.

The format of the attack is familiar. Vehicular attacks on crowds are now a popular means of such mass violence, and indeed this is not the first time such means have been employed in attacks on religious worshippers: in 2017, Darren Osborne - a Welsh Tommy Robinson fanboy - drove his van into a crowd at Finsbury Park mosque, killing one man. Islamist terror attacks have also taken this form, and on at least one occasion (the London Bridge rampage, also in 2017) Islamists have used mass stabbings.

This is one story you can tell about the Manchester attack: it fits into a pattern of spectacular, but basically small-scale, political violence - most notoriously employed by Islamists, but also by the extreme right. (I can think of no equivalent crimes committed by leftwingers in this country's recent history.) It is a picture, perhaps, of the failure of the various 'anti-terrorist', 'deradicalisation' efforts on the part of the British state in the last 25 years; but equally, it could be a picture of the inherent limits of these kinds of measures *as such*. That would be an interesting conversation to have.

### Hate marches?

The conversation we are in fact having is about the identity of the victims, who were, of course, Jews. Nothing is confirmed, as I write, about the actual motive of the attacker, and there are dangers in making assumptions too readily (the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida was initially widely assumed to be an anti-gay hate crime, but it turned out that the killer simply wanted to shoot up a crowded place, and had failed to get into any other club). It seems pretty likely, however, that the motive will turn out to be anti-Semitic.

In this respect, the synagogue attack is pretty *unusual*, in this day and age. In terms of direct threat to life and limb, it is certainly more dangerous to be in a mosque than a synagogue (indeed, there was an arson attack at a Brighton mosque this week); and Islamist outrages in this country have been notably indiscriminate in their targets (compared to, say, France, where synagogues have been targeted more often). That is, naturally, not the story we are being told in extremely shrill tones across the media.

An op-ed by Dave Rich of the Community Security Trust for *The Guardian* is typical - a long list of violent attacks on synagogues is adduced, but the attentive reader will notice that not a single one of them took place in Britain, apart from last week in Manchester. Nonetheless, Mr Rich is quite clear where the blame for this recent, entirely phantasmatic existential threat to British Jewry lies: "the rise in global anti-Semitism since the October 7 attack ... there is no doubt this threat to Jews has become much more acute since then".<sup>1</sup> No doubt, indeed!

Or, alternatively, take Labour peer Ian Austin in *The Sun*: unlike Rich, under no obligation to appeal to progressive sentiments in Rupert



Police are being ordered to further clamp down on protest

Murdoch's gutter rag, he offered readers a long and entirely unhinged rant. A representative sample: "I've been to watch the hate marches. You don't see banners calling for peace, for hostages to be released or for a 'two-state solution'. Jewish people were attacked because they are Jews. Brutal, murderous racism."

It would be beside the point to indicate that - at least until the 'I support Palestine Action' protests began, and apart from those - the number of arrests on these marches have been trivial; that there have been basically no social disturbances associated with them, despite frequent Zionist provocations; that a curiously large number of people on these 'anti-Jewish hate marches' are Jewish, and often take pains to advertise the fact that they are; in short, that the "brutal, murderous racism" has resulted in nothing in the way of actual brutality and murder. (Did al-Shamie actually ever attend such a march? Nobody knows - certainly not Ian Austin.) His solution is to "curb" the "hate marches" - "change the law if necessary".<sup>2</sup>

### Repression

As the old saying goes, one must never let a crisis go to waste. British support for Israel has survived largely because of the iron uniformity of the political class in subservience to the United States, which has chosen not to restrain Israel from its genocidal assault on Gaza and apparently universal war against its neighbours. British public opinion is wildly out of step with this consensus. It is perfectly clear,

despite the best efforts of a pliant and cowardly bourgeois media, that Israel has been near-continuously involved in indiscriminate mass murder for two years. It is the protestors, not the likes of Rich and Austin, who are representative of feeling in the country.

In the face of the gruesome reality unfolding in Gaza, the ever-mounting death toll (in particular of children), the deliberate imposition of famine and the sick games of the Gaza Humanitarian Fund, Zionism has been on the back foot in the battle of ideas. It has only had the vague innuendoes of "Jews feeling unsafe" to go on. Al-Shamie's crime gives them, at last, something concrete to hang their hat on.

So it is already proving. With another face-off between the Metropolitan Police and Defend Our Juries' 'arrestables' planned for last Saturday, Met commissioner Mark Rowley wrote a letter imploring DOJ to suspend its action, in the name of sensitivity to Jewish sensibilities. DOJ publicly refused to do so, and another few hundred people were arrested for supporting Palestine Action in the event.

New home secretary Shabana Mahmood has used this as an excuse to ram through more police powers to interfere with the right to protest (although, given that these protests involve hundreds of people willingly putting themselves in danger of arrest anyway, it is not clear how much of an effect this will have in practice). Proscription of DOJ is a real possibility; and if them, why not the

Socialist Workers Party? Why not us?

In the background here is a longer-term project to redefine anti-Semitism as consisting, substantially, of opposition to the state of Israel. That this is a *replacement* of the old definition rather than merely an *expansion* is more clear in the United States, where many of the most prominent people suppressing 'anti-Semitism' in the Palestinian movement are in fact straightforward *Christian* anti-Semites who support Israel so as to accelerate the return of Jesus Christ and the unfolding of the events in the Apocalypse of John (including the forcible conversion of some fraction of the Jewish people and the immediate condemnation of the rest to eternal hellfire).

This redefinition is a curious thing. On one level, it has been astonishingly successful - its conquest of the institutions of the state and civil society is all but complete, through the wide adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's 'definition' of anti-Semitism and similar things. Should a principled friend of the Palestinians be hauled up on anti-Semitic charges, appealing to common sense is unlikely to help.

On the other hand, the strength of the taboo on anti-Semitism is an inheritance of 20th century history - in particular the near-extermination of European Jews by the Nazi regime in World War II. The *moral force* is not derived from the specificity of Jewish people *per se*, let alone the state of Israel, but from their having been the victims of modern history's most infamous crime, which right-thinking

people do not wish to see repeated.

Zionism has always proposed Israel as the solution to this problem, and the idea is not wholly devoid of superficial plausibility. Yet, now that Israel is openly involved in genocidal conduct against the Palestinians, turning anti-Semitism into a question of support for Israel destroys that moral force. The prohibition on anti-Semitism becomes, instead, *obviously* a creature of morally scandalous decisions made by the state regimes that abet Israel, and *only* enforceable through direct repression by the state and the private bureaucracy. We are left with a sort of zombie taboo - the life has gone out of it, but it still shuffles around, biting people.

### Real anti-Semitism

One of the more ironic consequences of this is that genuine anti-Semitism - the identification of Jews *qua* Jews as malevolent alien elements - is slowly making a comeback in its old haunts on the far right. This is, once more, clearer stateside, with the rise of alt-right media celebrities like Nick Fuentes and Candace Owens openly committed to anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, and the emergence of a radical, traditionalist, Catholic movement, riddled with holocaust denial and general Jew-hatred.

There is no reason to suppose that this will not be repeated in Britain, though the fact that the current extreme-right golden boy, Tommy Robinson, is a zealous Israel supporter is holding things back somewhat. (The propriety of linking up with Robinson's crew is something of a delicate matter among the various self-appointed representatives of this country's Jews, with the Board of Deputies condemning the Israeli government for inviting him on a jolly, but more 'radical' elements happy to cooperate with his army of coked-up football casuals.) The overall degradation of political culture in the west, based on post-neoliberal social atomisation, tends to promote conspiracy theories, and many of the best established are anti-Semitic in character. The revival of anti-Jewish prejudice, therefore, becomes a mere matter of statistical probabilities.

The only real opposition to this kind of ideological derangement is glimpsed - if no more - precisely in the movement against Israel's genocide: the unity of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, atheists ... and whoever else, on the basis of little more than a shared humanitarian instinct: that such a crime must not be allowed on our watch; that we will all be called to account for it if it is. In order to be victorious, more than that mere instinct is necessary: we must understand the history that brought us to this point, the strength of the forces against us, and indeed the sources of our own strength. Above all, we need not a movement, but a party.

If the last week's events are any guide, the strength of the Palestine movement will face further tests. Meanwhile, the likelihood of outrages like the Manchester attack - directed at Jews, Muslims or anyone else - continues to escalate ●

paul.demarty@weeklyworker.co.uk

### Notes

1. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/oct/04/manchester-progressives-jewish-people-feel-very-alone.
2. www.thesun.co.uk/news/politics/36913105/ian-austin-marches-palestine.

## GREEN PARTY

# Red-green hot air

Zack Polanski wants to ‘save Britain’ by making it ‘fair’ and ‘more equal’. But, says **Carla Roberts**, genuine socialists work to organise the working class to overthrow the capitalist regime

**G**reen Party leader Zack Polanski is certainly running rings round Your Party. In the last couple of months alone almost 30,000 have joined the Greens. A good chunk of them will be among the 800,000 or so who previously expressed an interest in joining the Jeremy Corbyn Party, but will have been entirely frustrated by the delays, the lack of transparency and factional infighting at the top (over what exactly?). Polanski’s slick social media and easy rhetoric makes YP look very amateurish indeed. The Green Party conference last weekend, where he gave a rousing ‘leftwing’ speech, will have convinced many more.

Of course, the Greens’ record membership number of 90,000 is just a fraction of YP’s 800,000 - but who knows how many have actually properly signed up to become members of Your Party? We know that around 25,000 had joined via Zarah Sultana’s previous application system and are now being transferred over to the new membership database, which is controlled by Corbyn’s right-hand woman, Karie Murphy. But how many there are, in total, is a well-guarded secret. That probably means it is not very many - and most certainly nowhere near 800,000. Another clue: the regional assemblies, which were supposed to gather YP members ahead of the launch conference in November, have now been opened up to ‘supporters’, too - ie, the invitations will be sent out to anybody who has ever signed up.

Polanski has certainly made a splash - and has performed a marked shift to the left. Those who think Your Party should stick to platitudes like peace, justice and fairness should think again. Polanski says exactly that - and says it much better than Your Party, which is still saying ... well, next to nothing. As an aside, we hear that the four YP founding documents were due for launch on October 9, a few days before they are to be discussed at the first regional assembly in Manchester on October 12, which, incidentally, nobody has been invited to as I write! What an utter shambles.

Polanski now poses left, but only the naive would choose to ignore his colourful past. The man was a member of the Liberal Democrats for many years, standing in elections numerous times (and unsuccessfully so). He only joined the Green Party in 2017 and then fully jumped on the anti-Semitism bandwagon. He fought publicly for the party to adopt the IHRA mis-definition of anti-Semitism,<sup>1</sup> which redefines the meaning of the word: not discrimination against Jews, but criticism of Israel. Being a “pro-European Jew” he said, was one of the “reasons I couldn’t vote for Labour under Jeremy Corbyn”<sup>2</sup> - one of many attacks he has launched against JC.

Polanski has since issued a sort-of apology to Corbyn: “It was not helpful for me to assume that the Labour Party was rife with anti-Semitism, when we now know that blatantly was not true” (my emphasis).<sup>3</sup> No, Zack, everybody who actually bothered to look knew exactly, even then, that it was a big, fat lie, designed not just to get rid of Corbyn, but to silence the entire Palestine solidarity movement. But perhaps he has changed, so let us take him at his word.

His conference speech was



**Zack Polanski: European arms to defend European capitalism**

certainly well-received - it helped that the hall was full to the rafters (unlike the embarrassing Tory conference the week after). He was interrupted by cheers and standing ovations, especially when he spoke about the “need to end the genocide in Gaza. We cannot talk about stopping genocide without talking about the draconian crackdown on the right to protest. The proscription of Palestine Action must be withdrawn.”<sup>4</sup> In interviews during the conference, he also called for the “legalisation of all drugs” - we agree.

### Migration

Most interesting was perhaps his section on migration. He identified himself as a migrant: “My ancestors started in Latvia, but fled to Ukraine because of pogroms, where they faced more pogroms. Then they fled to Poland, where they faced the Nazis. Then they fled to England, where they faced anti-Semitism and so changed their name to sound more English. I changed it back.”

He culminated in a rousing call: “We say it loud, we say it clear: migrants and refugees are welcome here.” He says he spoke to a bloke called Paul who “wants to stop the boats. I told him that the Greens also want to stop the boats. We want to stop them through safe and legal routes.”

Of course, he did not discuss what should happen to people whose applications for asylum are denied or those who continue to enter illegally. Naturally, he made no mention of open borders either - but then, neither does most of the left. Groups like George Galloway’s Workers Party of Britain, the Socialist Party in England and Wales and the *Morning Star*’s Communist Party of Britain oppose only “racist” immigration controls - ‘non-racist’ immigration laws are okay and are needed to ‘protect Britain’ and British workers. The same arguments come from the trade union bureaucracy.

Genuine communists support the free movement of people. Everybody should have the right to live wherever they choose. The biggest drivers of migration are almost certainly war, economic collapse and state breakdown: Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, etc. But we recognise

that people also move from their home country because of a lack of opportunities and the simple wish for a better life.

It is true of course, that migrants *do* increase competition for jobs, housing and services. Capital generally supports migration, because it tends to depress wage levels. Unfilled job vacancies in care, health and leisure are explained by lazy British workers. In fact, it is lousy pay and lousy hours that cause unfilled vacancies.

But the idea that competition is *lessened* by immigration laws is entirely illusory. If people cannot move legally, they will move illegally. And illegal workers will radically *intensify*, not reduce, competition. They will accept even lower lousy pay and even longer lousy hours.

Communists do not support immigration controls of any kind. Our task is to organise *all* workers, whether they are legal or illegal, whether they were born in the UK or abroad, whether they are UK subjects or not. Every worker needs to be in a trade union, every worker needs to be won to join the struggle against capitalism and for socialism, which, if it is anything, is international.

### What is socialism?

Interestingly, Polanski barely touched on ‘traditional’ Green Party policies and only mentioned them in passing:

I’ve been asked dozens and dozens of times if the Green Party is an environmental movement or a social justice movement. As if you can’t speak up for our working class or LGBT+ communities at the same time as challenging the fossil fuel industry. So, let’s clear this up. You cannot be an effective environmentalist without talking about the deep inequality in our society.

He raged against the “poison of extreme wealth” and called for an unspecified “wealth tax” of the “top 1%” that is supposed to help “end rip-off Britain”, which he characterised as “a country where a tiny few have taken our power, our wealth. Things must change and, friends, it is time to take it back. The issues we face are

rooted in an economic model which is built on austerity and privatisation. We will reverse this and break the shackles of poverty.”

Take it *back*? When has it ever belonged to ‘us’? And what “economic model” do you mean, Zack? Is it capitalism? How do you ‘reverse’ that? When Zarah Sultana was recently asked about a possible pact between the Greens and Your Party, she said she opposed it, because “the Greens aren’t a socialist party and they are not based in the power of the working class”. Quite right. Zack Polanski replied to her, stating:

Do we shout that we’re a socialist party regularly? No, because I think most people don’t know what that means, and you switch people off. So, instead, I talk about lowering bills, about the public ownership of public services, and taxes on multimillionaires and billionaires. These are all socialist policies, and they’re all embedded and deep within the Green Party.<sup>5</sup>

Taxing the rich more and renationalisation hardly amount to socialism. Wage-slavery continues, while some big capitalists might flee the country, depriving you of their taxes. Clearly, there is no national, tax-funded road to socialism. Socialism is the transition to communism, the international rule of the working class. That is not what the Greens want. Their programme does not go beyond capitalism and no amount of painting it ‘radical red’ will change that.

Polanski’s view on Nato in this context is also of interest. Yes, he is to the left within the Greens - just. The 2024 manifesto states that the Green Party “recognises that Nato has an important role in ensuring the ability of its member states to respond to threats to their security. We would work within Nato.”<sup>6</sup> Polanski, on the other hand, has said Nato is “out of date”, because it is run by Donald Trump. He does not want to leave straight away though, but organise “alongside people who are working for peace and for democracy and diplomacy in the world”. Oh, and who is that? Our “European partners”<sup>7</sup> apparently - you know, the ones currently supplying

arms to Ukraine and Israel. Such a European defence pact would clearly defend - and advance - the interests of European capitalism in exploiting and robbing the world.

The former deputy leader of the Greens, Shahrar Ali, might have condemned a successful conference motion that grandly talks about “abolishing private landlords” as “reading like the *Communist manifesto*”, but, of course, it did no such thing. The most radical demand in it was that tenants would be given first right to buy when a landlord sells, with their “total rent paid discounted” and government-backed financing provided.

### Small and medium

Green perspectives as a whole remain firmly located within the narrow confines of capitalist society. True, there is an implicit rejection of monopoly capitalism, state hypertrophy and the ecologically destructive logic of production for the sake of production. However, sole traders, local businesses, mutual banks, cooperative enterprises are upheld as the alternative. Towards that end the Bank of England is to be given a mandate to fund the transition to a “fairer”, green capitalism, based on small and medium businesses, which apparently are the “lifblood of our economy and our communities”. Finance capital is reined in (or so they think), but continues, albeit in ‘responsible’ form. Essentially the same happens with industrial capital.

Programmatically, the Greens are unmistakably a petty bourgeois party, which wants to reform capitalism in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie - and that makes it (should the need arise) a possibly attractive option for the bourgeoisie too.

No, Polanski is no socialist and there is no repeat of the existential fight reminiscent of the German Greens in the 80s, when the ‘fundis’ tried to fight for an anti-capitalist programme. The ‘realos’ famously won and have made Die Grünen into the most pro-war party in the German parliament.

Polanski has no real answers that go to the root of our problems - ie, capitalism and how to overcome it. However, he has certainly managed to take the wind out of Your Party’s sails (it does not help that the YP ship is drifting along without a rudder in sight). All this stresses the importance of socialists fighting for the most radical programme and most democratic structures within Your Party. We might not succeed in turning it into what is actually needed - ie, a Communist Party that openly fights for the overthrow of capitalism and the rule of the working class - but we should certainly try to win over large sections of the membership ●

### Notes

1. [www.jewishnews.co.uk/green-party-elects-jewish-non-zionist-zack-polanski-as-new-leader](http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/green-party-elects-jewish-non-zionist-zack-polanski-as-new-leader).
2. [www.thejc.com/news/politics/zack-polanski-denies-labour-antisemitism-corbyn-szn52anv](http://www.thejc.com/news/politics/zack-polanski-denies-labour-antisemitism-corbyn-szn52anv).
3. *Ibid*.
4. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZx9VngoYnk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZx9VngoYnk).
5. [www.thecanary.co/trending/2025/09/29/zack-polanskis-socialism-response-is-really-resonating-with-people](http://www.thecanary.co/trending/2025/09/29/zack-polanskis-socialism-response-is-really-resonating-with-people).
6. [greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/a-fairer-greener-world](http://greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/a-fairer-greener-world).
7. [www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2025/oct/03/greens-labour-reform-conservatives-immigration-uk-politics-live-news-updates](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2025/oct/03/greens-labour-reform-conservatives-immigration-uk-politics-live-news-updates).

## TORY PARTY

# Rightwing bidding war

Kemi Badenoch promises a UK version of America's ICE, part of a desperate attempt to stem Tory support haemorrhaging to Reform. Not only does this threaten mass deportations, whole areas would be subject to a reign of terror, says **Eddie Ford**

**W**e have just had the Conservative Party conference in Manchester. Of course, it is not really a conference - more a rally, where the Tory leader, Kemi Badenoch, and members of the shadow cabinet parade in front of TV cameras and speak to a hand-picked audience that is essentially there to *clap*, not to question or take part in debate.

It does have to be said that the audience was noticeably smaller than last year, with the conference appearing very lacklustre - hardly surprising, given the truly abysmal poll ratings. For example, the members' 'debate' on 'free speech' was attended by only 55 people. Well, there was also the embarrassment of misspelling the country's name "Britian" on a chocolate bar given out in a goodie bag to the 'delegates'.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, before the conference, Badenoch attempted to counter the threat of Reform UK with the promise of a British version of Donald Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency - a theme which she continued in her opening speech in Manchester on October 5, her first as party leader. Badenoch's proposed "Removals Force" will be tasked with deporting 150,000 people a year and given £1.6 billion, not to mention "sweeping new powers", if the Tories somehow manage to win the next election. This would include the ability to use facial recognition technology without warning to help identify those eligible for removal, even though Badenoch has denounced plans for digital identity cards on civil liberties grounds - which seems like an impossible square to circle, but consistency is not something you expect from a Tory Party leader.

Under the plans, Badenoch continued, the taskforce would be expected to "work closely" with the police, and officers would be required to conduct immigration checks on everyone they stop or arrest. Apparently, we are told, the ICE model has proved to be a "successful approach" in removing migrants who have illegally entered the USA - deporting nearly 200,000 people in the first seven months of Trump's second presidency (at a total cost of a cool \$170 billion). Therefore, at least in her imagination, it is something to be emulated as part of her perverted bidding war with Nigel Farage.

## Deportations

The Reform leader has promised to deport up to 600,000 people in its first parliamentary term if his party wins the next election, so Badenoch can now better that by an extra 50,000. She would have us believe that it is about saving money on hotels, and all the rest of it. This is an obvious lie, of course. The Labour government, under intense political pressure from its right, has said it will get rid of housing migrants in hotels by the end of this parliament. But veracity does not matter. Rather, it is about *performative cruelty* - Kemi Badenoch wanting to be seen as even nastier than Reform and Nigel Farage.

More to the point, where the hell they do they put these 150,000 or more people? Now, the US appears to be handing migrants back to Iran, according to a foreign ministry official, Hossein Noushabadi - who stated that most of those being flown back to Iran had entered the US illegally.<sup>2</sup> It is a



ICE has turned some American cities into occupied zones

grotesque example of rare cooperation between two countries that are formally enemies.

Well, maybe a British government under Kemi Badenoch, or even Sir Keir Starmer, will come to a similar agreement. But what about people who originated in other 'trouble spots', like Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somaliland, Libya, Afghanistan... Where will they put these people? In the real world, they cannot move 150,000 to Uganda... or to France, on the grounds that they came over in a small boat from that country.

Of course, Badenoch said that a future Tory government would leave the European Convention on Human Rights as "a necessary step" (putting Britain in the same league as Russia and Belarus). Other international treaties would also have to be consigned to the bonfire; eg, the UN convention on refugees. Domestically, it is the same. Legal aid in immigration and asylum cases would be withdrawn, and the right to take migration decisions to tribunals or judicial review ended.

But, even then, there are still the 150,000 arrested by the Removals Force every year. If they are not to disappear into the black economy, they will have to be confined behind high walls and barbed wire and put under guard. Well, the prison estate is already crowded to the rafters. No less to the point, prison and special camps are hellishly expensive. For example, confining someone to prison costs more than sending a child to Eton.

Simultaneously, in her October 8 'keynote' speech that closed the Manchester conference, Badenoch promised, through her new economic

"golden rule", to reduce government borrowing by £47 billion. Fancifully this will be done through cutting the number of civil servants and slashing benefits payments for the sick and disabled.

But Badenoch's plans are *not* about saving money. That is clearly not the case. No, as with America's ICE agency, the Removals Force will unleash a reign of terror in British towns and cities. Anyone with a brown or black face, anyone speaking with a foreign accent, anyone they do not like, will be subject to stop and search... and possible arrest. Not only will illegal migrants live in fear. Legal migrants too will worry about going to work, shopping, walking down the road.

Manchester was dominated by the immigration question, in a year that is easily on course to break records for the most arrivals in small boats - which every mainstream party has pledged to stop, like King Canute before the rising tide.

## Challengers

Frankly, this writer never took seriously the idea swirling around that Sir Keir Starmer's demise was imminent, or that Andy Burnham was about to challenge him for the leadership - he is not even an MP! But Kemi Badenoch is a rather different matter. The Tories have after all replaced so many leaders over recent years that it is almost becoming a habit. Unhappily for Badenoch, a New YouGov poll shows that half of Tory members want *her* replaced, while 64% want a pact with Reform, and 46% support a full merger.<sup>3</sup>

One of Reform's leading figures, Gawain Towler, has in fact suggested a merger with the Tories... if they are led by Robert Jenrick. He pictures a post-electoral Tory apocalypse, where the rump of this once great party becomes something like the Liberal Unionists in the 1890s - Jenrick being a sort of Joe Chamberlain, bringing his raggle-taggle army over with him. His Liberal Unionists were a separate party which formed an alliance with the Conservatives in the 1890s before eventually merging completely in 1912.

Jenrick - Kemi's rival last year in the leadership election - proved to be a bit of a star at Manchester, getting accused of "toxic nationalism" after he doubled down on his complaint about "not seeing another white face" in Birmingham's Handsworth district - before going on to say it was not the kind of country he wanted to live in due to a lack of integration.

Clearly, Jenrick judges people by little more than their skin pigmentation. True, the slippery Mel Stride broke ranks to a certain extent by saying the remarks were "not words that I would have used", while Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader, was more direct and classified it as "racism". Such remarks, of course, only act to further endear Jenrick to the Tory membership... and his future Reform UK coalition partners (not that we ourselves are *predicting* any such outcome).

There is, however, not only the example of the 'strange death' of the Liberal Party: there are more recent developments in Canada. Its Conservative Party, formed in

2003, managed to gain support amongst young people because it campaigned on housing. From this Jenrick concludes that the Tories "got it wrong in the past": thus "the new Conservative Party" should be one in "which we are helping those people onto the housing ladder to have a stake in society". Naturally, his use of the term, "new Conservative", has excited speculation that he might renew the right if he was to become leader by renaming the party, just as Tony Blair constantly talked about 'New Labour' to persuade voters it was "changing" - ie, moving to the right.

But Jenrick is not the only figure on the right who could replace Kemi Badenoch - shadow home office minister Katie Lam is also being touted as a possible contender.<sup>4</sup> She is 34 and from a state school, which presumably is a plus nowadays, but, showing what a bright thing she is, Lam went to Cambridge, then Goldman Sachs and straight to Downing Street. Admittedly, she was deputy chief of staff to Boris Johnson - nowadays so reviled by right-leaning Tories for the 'Boris wave' that saw a significant increase in immigration under his leadership. Either way, she talked about how much she hates migrants, so that is definitely a one-up for Katie.

## Far right

Clearly politics are galloping to the right... and the far right. Advance UK was formed by Ben Habib, the former deputy leader of Reform and also former Brexit Party MEP.<sup>5</sup> What is notable about Advance is that Elon Musk is throwing his weight, and presumably money, behind it, because Nigel Farage is "weak sauce who will do nothing", and Habib himself claimed that Musk had urged him to set up the party. On September 6 2025 Advance claimed to have recruited 30,000 before registering with the electoral commission (but there are good reasons to doubt such a figure).

Either way, Advance advocates a "Christian constitution" for the UK, but also rejection of "supranational institutions" such as the UN. At Tommy Robinson's 'Unite the Kingdom' rally in September, Advance was listed as one of the sponsors... and he himself appears to have signed up. Whether Advance UK will be a serious electoral rival for Reform UK, or a 'take to the streets' auxiliary, remains to be seen. Either way, it has more than the whiff of fascism about it.

We should take the same open-ended approach to the prospect of Nigel Farage becoming the next prime minister, as today's polls would have it. On balance, however, I would bet on both the Labour Party and the Tory Party surviving, as they are historically based *class parties*, and hence unlikely to disappear, at least in the short term. Nonetheless, the tectonic plates are moving ●

eddie.ford@weeklyworker.co.uk

## Notes

1. theguardian.com/politics/2025/oct/06/conservative-party-misspell-britain-conference-chocolate-bar.
2. bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgrql7gd10do.
3. yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/53116-half-of-tory-members-say-kemi-badenoch-should-not-lead-party-into-next-election.
4. theguardian.com/politics/2025/oct/04/rise-of-katie-lam-next-tory-leader-migration.
5. advanceuk.org.uk.

## AUSTRALIA

# Opening the second front

Labourism dominates the working class electorate in Australia. Meanwhile, sectarianism dominates the left groups that pass themselves off as Marxist. **Brunhilda Olding**, a member of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation, welcomes an initiative designed to challenge both labourism and sectarianism

Australia's history as a unified state is above all else a history of labourism. And the highest form of that is the Australian Labor Party.

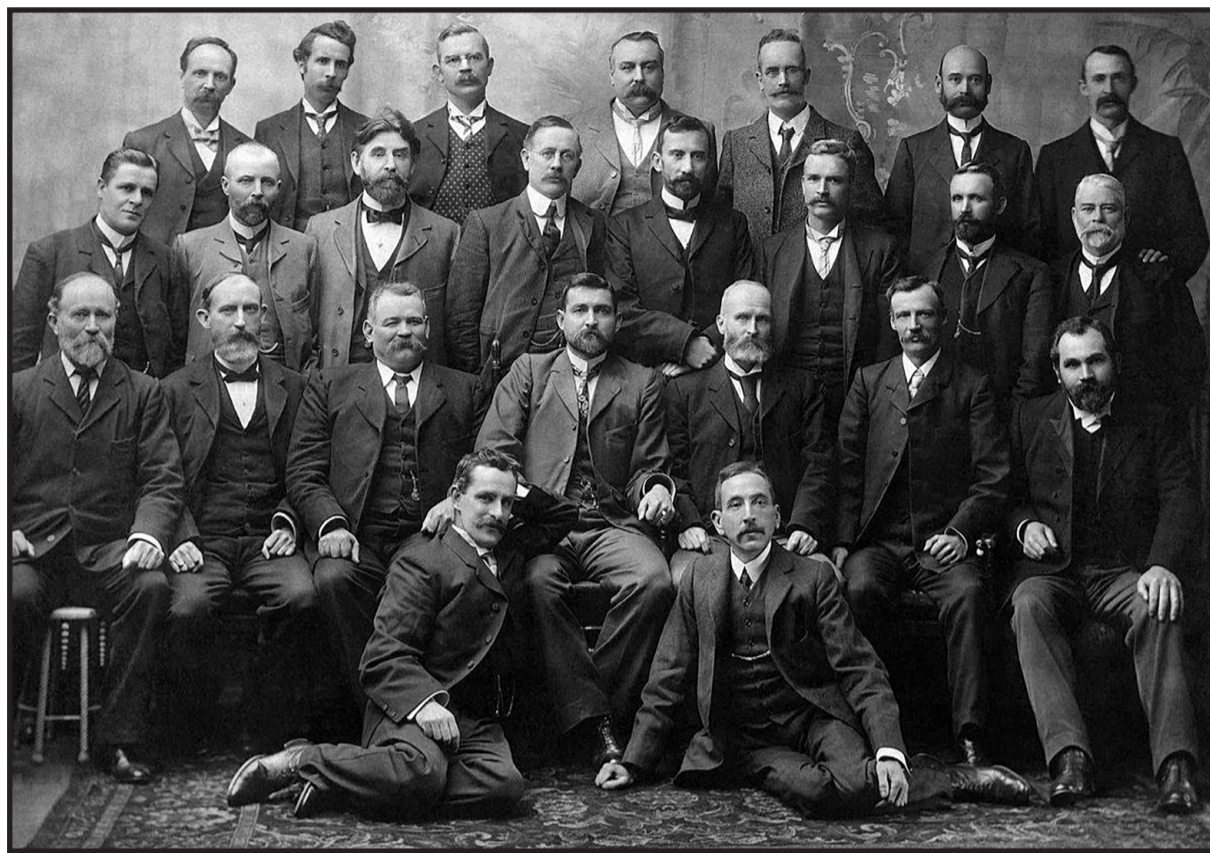
The ALP was the first nationwide political project, founded in 1891, a decade before Federation. It has always been through, and around, the ALP that the Australian proletariat has been defined as a unified political movement. The core thesis of Humphrey McQueen's *A new Britannia* rests on the examination and explanation of the historical logic and development of the ALP's political hegemony and the cultural, political and social effects that come from that. If one is to understand anything about Australia and its fragmented left scene, one must first understand that.

The launch of *Labor Tribune* in September as a publication of Marxists within the ALP has overall been met with a level of scepticism by much of the organised Australian left. The hegemonic Clifite grouping, Socialist Alternative, with its deeply sectarian and student politics-based opposition to the Labor Party, has dominated the immediate reaction. This opposition overshadows much of the important nuances and the deeply complex relationship of the socialist movement to the ALP.

The Labor Party emerged as the logical outgrowth of the immediate interests of the labour movement in Australia. As opposed to the classical parties of social democracy, which it is often compared with, and much more akin to its British sister party, the ALP never emerged with a Marxist core. Whilst early Australian Marxism developed in and around the ALP, it never reached a unified position until the 1920s, with the formation of the Communist Party of Australia. The solidification of this divide would serve as the framework for the Australian left going forward, and indeed still shapes the political scene on the left today.

The Labor left was historically deeply tied into the communist movement; the difference now is merely that the Labor left is cut adrift from its external CPA brain and drifting to the right. Outside the ALP there is a layer of notionally anti-labourite sects (Socialist Alternative and the Anarchist Communist Federation stand out in particular) in constant conflict with labourites attached at the hip to the ALP's low-ranking functionaries. The critiques lobbed at the ALP and its supporters, however, fundamentally do nothing to challenge the political hegemony of the ALP or of labourism: indeed the common rhetoric of the anti-ALP left is farcical reheated labourism, rather than any attempts to solidly challenge the ALP on a genuine Marxist basis, thus allowing the ALP and its political project to march on unchallenged.

The recent AUKUS nuclear submarine deal has seen the redevelopment of more openly oppositional factions and groupings within the ALP - most notably Labor Against War (LAW). *Labor Tribune's* members have all been involved in this struggle - either in the form of LAW or in their involvement in the mass Palestine



World's first labour government: Chris Watson's ministry, sworn in April 27 1904, Melbourne

struggles, including the March for Humanity on August 3, which saw at least 200,000 protestors in Sydney march across the Harbour Bridge in opposition to the will of the ALP New South Wales premier, Chris Minns. The march also saw a wide layer of ALP members, including MPs, march under the banner of Labor Friends of Palestine.

### Classical Marxism

These signs of division within the ALP have broadly been ignored by the Australian left - indeed for many socialists even getting them to acknowledge the existence of the layers of at least notionally pro-Palestine members of the ALP is akin to pulling teeth. It is within this immediate context, as well as the growing tension between the ALP and sections of its historic union support base that *Labor Tribune* has been launched.

It could be argued that its roots emerged from the historic CPA. And while Tribune activists come from a range of political backgrounds, it is unlikely an accident that the comrades have chosen the name of the CPA's newspaper, *Tribune*.

The CPA's dissolution in 1991 saw its legal assets and formal organisational continuity transform into SEARCH (Social Education, Action and Research Concerning Humanity) Foundation. Whilst SEARCH conducts very few public political events, primarily serving as a historical society, ginger group to the Labor left and Greens and the stomping grounds for ex-CPA members, this political lineage to the historic CPA is not hidden.

*Labor Tribune's* first publication contained a reprint of a Comintern letter to the CPA outlining the political reasoning why the newly formed, and politically untested, party should not cut itself off from the ALP.<sup>1</sup> Discerning readers of this text will notice the intense similarities to Lenin's famous *Leftwing communism* - which makes sense, considering the deep political, cultural and social

similarities between Great Britain and Australia.

*Labor Tribune* points out that the rules and constitution of Australian Labor open with the claim of it being a "democratic socialist party". This is combined with the fact that the party's primary objective is the "democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields".<sup>2</sup> It is from these two bases, *Labor Tribune* argues, that the tasks of Marxists in the ALP emerge.

Throughout the core documents of *Labor Tribune*, a picture is painted of what their conception of Marxism means. This picture is one that will be familiar to readers of the *Weekly Worker* and *Partisan Magazine* in Australia. It is one of classical Marxism, with a firm commitment to internationalism, democratic republicanism and Marxism as a political strategy of and for the proletariat.

### Vulgar economism

The emphasis on the need to fight for a genuine republic is deeply refreshing in a Marxist movement dominated by a vulgar economism, which consistently pushes to the side the myriad constitutional and political issues that must be championed in order to win socialism. Rather than facing the undemocratic, and fundamentally anti-proletarian, nature of the Australian state head on, and fighting against it in every formation, most sects merely stomp around chanting about the need for bigger and bolder strikes, or the need to lend (un)critical support to either the Greens or the ALP. Even the Socialists - notionally the largest socialist group in Australia, and one that has strong chances of winning elected representation over the next few years, especially in their stronghold of Victoria - has utterly refused to pose any constitutional questions or opposition to the Australian state in any fundamental form.

Instead it relies on a combination of moralistic and fundamentally liberal political demands, and warmed over labourism, with a covering of radical paint.

The position outlined by *Labor Tribune*, on the other hand, is in many respects a breath of fresh air, amidst the constant squabbling of the sects and their fundamentally labourite project, and one that ties in with the struggle currently waged by the Revolutionary Communist Organisation for the reconstitution of the Communist Party in Australia. In their article explaining the political reasoning behind their launch they argue that "*Labor Tribune* aims to contribute to the formation of an authoritative political centre that can rebuild a revolutionary strategy for the working class movement, with militant opposition to the monarchist constitutional order at its centre."<sup>3</sup> This perspective is one aligned with the increasingly developed 'partyist' movement in international Marxism. An outgrowth which makes sense, when you see Marcus Strom, a contributor to the *Weekly Worker*, is editor of *Labor Tribune*.

Australia has seen the development of a partyist current with the formation of the RCO. The launch of *Labor Tribune* alongside the growth of the RCO, and the increasing question of whether the Socialists actually function as a party (which it currently very much does not), will only further reinforce the need for a genuine mass Communist Party with influence over large sections of the ALP's left once again. In this regard the launch of *Labor Tribune* has seemingly come at an opportune time, as the tasks and developments of the Australian left increasingly pose the party question point blank.

In that regard it is positive news that *Labor Tribune* has seemingly managed to develop a base within the ALP. At the current stage of the project, it is positioned to draw in layers of the pre-existing scattered Marxists within the party who have

not yet cut up their membership card in disgust. In that sense, it cannot be regarded as an 'entryist' vehicle, but arising from within the ALP itself.

Outside the ALP, however, *Tribune* has a much more contentious field to contend with. Many of the immediate reactions from the wonderful world of the Australian sects is tinged with the bone-deep sectarianism that most have against the ALP.

Whilst pre-existing ties, and a shared political perspective with the RCO, has ensured a warm welcome, at least on that front, the broader Australian left has, if they react at all, responded with a layer of general disdain. There has been one notable - if somewhat sectarian - public response to *Tribune* so far. Jordan van den Lamb (aka 'Purple Pingers'), a recent Victorian Socialists Senate candidate for Victoria in the May federal election, has written a letter of greeting published by *Labor Tribune*. Hopefully this trend will continue, and a genuine culture of debate and engagement will emerge.

### Left adrift

With the formation of *Tribune*, the historic question of the ALP is being forced into the face of Australian Marxism once again. In the 50 years since the election and subsequent overthrow of prime minister Gough Whitlam and the collapse of the CPA in 1991, the ALP left and the Marxist sectarian left have drifted nowhere. Where once Jim Cairns, the deputy prime minister and effective fellow traveller of the CPA, had mass levels of support and influence over a democratic and thriving ALP branch in Victoria, now the entire culture of the party has been hollowed out into an arena for cliques with vaguely ideological names to backstab each other - the divide between the Victorian 'socialist left' and 'industrial left' being a prime example. In NSW it is between the Albanese aligned 'hard left' and its oppositional 'soft left'.

*Labor Tribune* has the task of injecting genuine communist politics into the internal life of the ALP, and fighting to rebuild proletarian politics - and political culture in every field it can. Through that, and alongside the work of the RCO outside the ALP, the fight for the merger of the workers' movement and socialism can increasingly be waged.

Thus, if the history of the Australian state is a history of the ALP, hopefully one day we will be able to say that the history of the Australian revolution was the history of its overcoming. The hegemonic 'common sense' of labourism must be overcome - via Marxists challenging its stranglehold of the ALP alongside the communist movement, through clear, concrete programmatic struggle inside and outside the ALP, winning the hegemony of Marxist politics within the proletariat in Australia ●

### Notes

1. [labortribune.net.au/why-we-are-launching-labor-tribune](http://labortribune.net.au/why-we-are-launching-labor-tribune).
2. <https://www.alp.org.au/media/3572/alp-national-constitution-adopted-19-august-2023.pdf>.
3. [labortribune.net.au/why-we-are-launching-labor-tribune](http://labortribune.net.au/why-we-are-launching-labor-tribune).

## ITALY



Greta Thunberg addresses a solidarity rally from the flotilla

# Millions strike for Gaza

For nearly two years the solidarity movement was fringe, small scale and politically ineffective. Not any longer. **Tobias Abse** reports on the mass strikes and demonstrations triggered by the Israeli attacks on the Global Sumud Flotilla. Israel is undoubtedly losing the propaganda war

Over the last fortnight there has been the greatest labour movement mobilisation in Italy of the last 20 years. This has been triggered, not by the marked decline in real wages, or any domestic issue, such as the rundown of Italy's health service, or the sharp cuts in welfare benefits that were introduced soon after Georgia Meloni took office. No, it is the war in Gaza.

Popular reaction to what has been rightly perceived as a genocide against the Palestinians, rather than a war against Hamas, has been slower in Italy than in the UK. For a long time, the weekly demonstrations in Milan and the fortnightly ones in Rome were very small-scale affairs, largely confined to the Palestinian diaspora and small groups on the far left with a long history of support for the Palestinian cause.

Insofar as anyone else took any action, it tended to be met with massive state repression, especially against university students. Occasionally the police went so far - for instance in kettling and beating up a group of a few dozen secondary school students in Pisa in February 2024 - that wider layers took exception. However, the thousands of ordinary Pisans who took to the streets to protest against that particular local outrage did not trigger any more widespread or long-term movement.

It was not until June 7 2025 that anything that could be described as a major national demonstration over Gaza took place in Rome as a result of the parties of the

parliamentary left or centre-left - the Partito Democratico (PD), Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S) and the Alleanza Verdi Sinistra (AVS) - finally clearly coming out against the Israeli genocide. Moreover, while the June 7 march, organised by the PD, M5S and AVS, was large by Italian standards (around 50,000), it was still a lot smaller than UK demonstrations during the same period.

### Naval blockade

What seems to have been the spark for recent events was the Global Sumud Flotilla. Although people from about 40 countries were involved - it aimed, of course, to break the Israeli naval blockade of Gaza - the Italian contingent was substantial, and in terms of publicity inside Italy, the involvement of four Italian parliamentarians - two from the PD, one from M5S and a Green MEP belonging to AVS - made it impossible for the mainstream media, and even the hostile Meloni government, to ignore it.

The idea of a general strike in solidarity with the flotilla and the people of Gaza was first mooted by the Unione Sindacale di Base (USB), and was more or less immediately backed up by other similar minor trade union confederations. These groups, which I would characterise as anarcho-syndicalists (even if some of their older leaders came from the autonomist tradition associated with Toni Negri), had been in the habit of calling general strikes over a variety of issues: eg, on International Women's

Day. While they sometimes manage to involve key groups of workers, such as tube drivers in Rome and Milan, such 'general strikes' are usually damp squibs.

Therefore, when I first saw references to the USB's planned general strike over Gaza, I thought it was a laudable but utterly impractical plan. One of the factors that meant that, on this occasion, the anarcho-syndicalist dream became a practical reality (for one day at least) was the involvement of dockers in ports like Genoa and Livorno in plans to refuse to handle the cargo of ships carrying arms to Israel. The idea of a general strike also met with some response amongst engineering workers, including those belonging to the FIOM, the engineering workers' union attached to the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), the most leftwing of the three major trade union confederations.

It was pressure from the FIOM that led Maurizio Landini - the general secretary of the CGIL, who had earlier in his career led the FIOM himself - to try to outbid the USB by calling a general strike for Friday September 19, a few days before the USB's long-planned September 22 action. Landini's belated call came only on September 17, and this lack of adequate notice made it impossible to call out public-sector workers without breaking the law, which is generally a matter of much more concern to the CGIL than to the wilder USB, COBAS, CUB, etc. Moreover, the instructions the CGIL

gave varied according to industrial sectors and geographical regions. In some instances, workers were just told to strike for the last two hours of their shift, rather than for eight hours or even half a day.

### Success

In my view, the CGIL general strike was a relative success - especially in Tuscany, where workers were called out for longer, and the participation of engineering workers in provinces like Livorno was very high. However, I will acknowledge that the USB General Strike on Monday September 22 had a greater impact, because it was accompanied by more widespread and larger demonstrations, with the USB translating the slogan of the French movement of September 8 into the Italian, 'Blocciamo tutto' ('Block everything').

It seems probable that the bulk of the crowds on September 22 were made up of school and university students, pensioners and unemployed or irregularly employed workers, rather than wage labourers in permanent employment of the kind that would be at the heart of a conventional trade union struggle. Even the USB leaders admitted a few days later that the percentage of the workforce involved was rather small.

Significant as the two general strikes were, it was the third one, on Friday October 3, that was the most spectacular. On this occasion, the CGIL and USB buried their longstanding differences and issued a joint call for action, which was also backed

by COBAS and CUB, etc. Moreover, this strike was called at very short notice, in response to the Israeli attack on the flotilla on the night of October 1.

From the moment that the news of the Israeli attack became public knowledge, thousands took to the streets all over Italy, and these spontaneous demonstrations continued the next day. Therefore, by October 3, the ranting of transport minister Matteo Salvini about the alleged illegality of the strike in sectors such as public transport was ignored, and about 60% of the entire workforce came out - quite apart from the school and university students, pensioners, unemployed and others who swelled the crowds in demonstrations in 100 cities, probably involving about two million people. On Saturday October 4, the movement continued with up to one million participating in a national demonstration in Rome, originally called by a number of Palestinian groups, the largest crowd in that city for about 20 years.<sup>1</sup>

All this - not least the involvement of thousands of workers in political demonstrations of international solidarity - is very much to be welcomed. But the question is, how can this working class politicalisation be further developed in the interests of the whole movement? ●

### Notes

1. The period 2001-03 was marked by a series of massive demonstrations about both trade union issues and the Iraq war.

## DISCUSSION

# Abundant material wealth for all

What sort of manifesto do communists need? One that maximises appeal, inspires with ambition and yet goes with the arc of history, says **Ted Reese**. We can, he believes, turn ‘Get rich or die trying’ into a communist slogan

‘Manifesto of X Party’, ‘X country’s road to socialism’, ‘X Party: what we stand for’ - these are typical titles socialist/communist parties give their manifestos. The framing is somewhat insular - it appeals to people who are already aligned to socialist politics, which is presently a small minority.

‘Abundant material wealth for all: the X Party manifesto for the coming socialist revolution’, by contrast, vastly broadens and in fact maximises the appeal of the title, piques the interest of the unconverted, and speaks to the needs and wants of ‘the masses’ - people are, after all, more likely to buy a lottery ticket than a political, let alone revolutionary, pamphlet.

‘Abundance for all’ may seem like a pipe dream, but the arc of history in fact bends towards it - albeit non-unilinearly, since, for one thing, capitalism is, of course, characterised by extreme busts and booms. Major historical transitions are largely underpinned by rising productivity and wealth creation, though. As such, one of the primary rallying cries of our movement should be that *socialism is the next and greatest ever gold rush* - inspiring adventure, ambition, and aspiration. ‘Get rich or die trying’ should be a communist slogan.

During the development of capitalism since the 1960s, annual productive output has roughly doubled every 25 years, with that compound growth adding up to increasingly exponential growth. In terms of raw numbers - leaving aside for the moment the fact that extractive production is not environmentally or even quantitatively sustainable<sup>1</sup> - the world’s productive capacity is ‘already capable’ of providing extremely plentiful material wealth for all (if not, because of capital’s tendency to centralise wealth, in terms of distribution).

This factor is contributing towards making capitalism historically obsolete, since, the more commodities (use values/goods made and sold for profit) we produce in larger quantities and in quicker time, the more their value withers away. One gigabyte of data storage - now the most vital part of production - fell from \$193,000 in 1980 to just \$0.03 in 2014, for example; while the purchasing power of the US dollar has fallen by nearly 100% over the past century.

That costs of production tend unsustainably towards zero - until shooting back up when the bust finally comes - makes the necessity of a post-money/capitalist system crystal-clear. What is the true meaning of freedom? Free production - free from the barriers of money and profit; the capacity to produce plenty for all.

## Anti-communism

The recognition that our rising productive capacity lays the foundation for a qualitatively higher, commonly owned system of production makes the suggested ‘Abundance’ title the best one for addressing and combating anti-communist sentiment, as the class struggle intensifies and - vitally - *shifts in character*.

Anti-communism is not only a symptom of ruling class propaganda, state oppression that enforces obedience, and the capitalist state’s education system (which ‘dumbs down’ the masses for ideological purposes, but also because funding good education eats into already thinning profit margins): the material basis for anti-communism is broader and more fundamental than that.

Most workers are not presently



Filippo della Valle ‘Abundance’ (1698)

communists and most are probably not even very radical social democrats. We seem to act as if this problem is exclusively the fault of ourselves as communists and the broader left and, while that is true to some extent, some powerful historical factors are simply beyond our control. For one, humans regardless of class obviously have a pretty strong track record of ‘going with the flow’ or ‘taking the path of least resistance’, because of the self-preservation instinct and the brain’s obsession with energy conservation.

In our own time, not only the communist left, but the social-democratic left, has withered, as people have adapted to survive their increasingly capitalistic environment. The commodity fetish appears to strengthen as no-one - other than a few capitalist vultures - wants the bust to arrive. With each passing decade, for example, a greater proportion of people have tended to become investors in private

property. In 1989, the percentage of US households that owned stocks was 32%, rising to 53% in 2001 and 58% in 2023.<sup>2</sup> What we have seen then during the post-1970s era of ‘neoliberalism’ is a tendency towards either ‘semi-bourgeoisification’ or ‘semi-proletarianisation’, whereby an increasingly large portion of the working class has been made dependent on supplementing wages by investing in stocks, including via pension schemes, reinforcing and deepening pro-capitalist mindsets (while home ‘ownership’ through mortgage payments - which banks also invest in stocks and debt - has had a similar, compounding effect).

The ‘good news’ that largely will not occur to non-Marxists is that the trend represents the increasing *socialisation* of economic ownership - another organic move towards a socialist mode of production. Capital’s falling profitability compels it to open up and seek new sources of

revenue by leeching off of the public and the consumer. Within capitalist relations of production, the trend, of course, cannot last - it needs to be completed by that change in the mode of production. The pace of the trend has slowed down and, more critically, the time for which stocks are held is plummeting - down to 10 months from five years in 1975.<sup>3</sup> The figure is even starker in the UK - down to 0.8 years from 9.7 years in 1980 - a decline of 91.75%.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the need for shorter- and shorter-term profit-seeking is approaching the point that such supplemental investments are on the verge of being absolutely disincentivised. Furthermore, the richest 10% of US households own 93% of stock market wealth - up from 82% in 1990; and corporations are making state-backed legal moves to block ‘shareholder democracy/activism’. Capitalism is, in fact, increasingly exclusionary - which must eventually compel the excluded

to *re-adapt* and fight for a new, inclusionary, socialist system.

What we are likely to experience then with future major financial/economic crashes is a critical shift in the balance of class forces, as portions of the capitalist class (via bankruptcies) and maybe close to the entirety of the semi-proletariat are fully proletarianised, re-proletarianised or even lumpenised (made destitute).

As exchange value - the value held within commodities, including the money-commodity - withers away, so does the capitalist class. A process is therefore underway in which the change in the class character of the masses will eventually *objectively tip the balance of forces in the class struggle in favour of socialism*.

Capitalists and semi-proletarians, though, do not, of course, instantly acquire a Marxist outlook, the moment they are demoted into the ranks of the proletariat. Their ‘petty/semi bourgeois’ and anti-communist consciousness is likely retained and perhaps exacerbated by the traumatising experience they are thrown into, mixed with their neurologically ingrained ideology and intensifying exposure to rightwing propaganda (which blames economic crises on public spending, central bank money printing, etc). As capital becomes more dependent on state contracts, workers become more dependent on repressive roles in state employment.

## Easy solutions

Easier solutions than revolution are instinctively yearned for. The concern about ‘overpopulation/migration’ seems to be very widespread - not only among white people - and is logically quite instinctive, because the immediate problem *appears to be* falling resources per capita, rather than the inherent crisis-prone nature of capitalism. (The capitalist class, of course, tends to accelerate the importation of labour, in order to offset falling profitability by expanding and cheapening the labour base - which also creates opportunities to leach off the taxpayer by creating state contracts in border control and ‘warehousing’. We must defend migrants’ rights, but we could also do a better job of voicing our opposition to imperialist plunder in terms of brain drains that leave poorer and oppressed nations with huge skills and labour shortages. We should not be frightened to explain that socialism will lessen the *compulsion* to migrate or that we will need borders in the early stages of socialism in order to control capital.)

To help workers and ‘the downwardly mobile middle classes’ overcome anti-communist instincts and attitudes, we have to appeal to their immediate as well as long-term needs and wants. They want back what they had. They want the things they were planning and aiming to achieve and build. They want to protect what they still have. We must convince them that their interests therefore lay with communism - not simply because communism is and always has been better; but because capitalism is reaching its own historical limits, since the automation revolution is making money worthless and waged labour redundant. Robots cannot be exploited for profit and cannot buy goods or rent services. We have to point loudly at this reality at every turn - pulling heads out of the sand if needs be. This must be our most prominent argument. We must attack the root at least as much as the symptoms.

A communist manifesto then must

appeal to immediate needs and long-term wants and aspirations. This is critical from a neuroscientific point of view as much as anything. If, as is increasingly accepted, ‘addictions’ are learned behaviours (rather than diseases) that can be unlearned and supplanted by developing different habits, then class consciousness and ideology should be treated as learned habits.

How do we change habits? They are changing all the time - we all change a little bit everyday, of course. But, to make changes lasting and with intention, a few principles can help. A modern neuroscientific approach recommends: (1) starting with a small target; (2) increasing the target incrementally; (3) breaking the new habit down into chunks; (4) aiming for consistency, not perfection; (5) focusing on systems instead of goals.

A start

If you want, say, to learn to inhibit stress and aim to do so by meditating for 20 minutes a day, you could start with:

- (1) One minute per day.
- (2) Once comfortable with that, after say a week or two, move on to two minutes, and so on. As you get towards 10 minutes, you could:
- (3) Break this into two chunks to make that stretch of time less daunting.
- (4) You could plan to take one or two days off a week, so that when you need a break you do not end up missing three days in a row, which could make you feel like a failure.
- (5) Instead of focusing on the goal of 20 minutes, focus on embracing the process of becoming someone who is mastering self-control through meditation.

If you need to cut refined sugar out of your daily consumption to reverse the build-up of disease/chronic inflammation in your body, trying to do so immediately is likely to result in a sugar and dopamine crash, reinforcing the cravings and chronic sugar-dopamine, rush-crash cycle. It is much more viable for the body to adapt biochemically and neurochemically if you reduce your refined sugar intake by, say, 10% every two to four weeks - while also slowly introducing complex sugars from wholewheat carbs and fibrous fruits in small doses that gradually increase. As the new habit forms, the old habit withers away. You stop thinking about what you used to eat and now get a much more consistent drip-feed of sugar, energy and dopamine.

Stress compartmentalises the brain - its different regions stop communicating with each other, generating fear and selfishness (which we could associate with intensifying capitalist competition and fascistic ideology). De-stressing the brain enables it to communicate as a whole (like the coordinated planning of a socialist economy). Developing revolutionaries surely requires developing fearlessness.

How do we apply these principles? Certainly not by aiming for ‘great leaps forward’ - again, human brains are not good at coping with big, immediate changes. People cannot do algebra before addition or triathlons before learning to swim. We have to challenge ourselves and ask: are we potentially re-enforcing reactionary habits or working class divisions by attacking particular perspectives too frequently and vehemently? Do we need to take a different approach? Is this a habit of ours that we need to work on ourselves?

If our manifesto is based on ultimate communist ideals that cannot be realised without decades of socialist development instead of at least incorporating immediate needs, then we are likely to bite off more than we can chew. Take, for the sake of making the point, an exaggerated ‘ultra-left’

manifesto called ‘Full communism now’ with proposals such as:

- Abolish the nation and ban all national emblems
  - Abolish border controls
  - Abolish the family
  - Abolish religion
  - Abolish gender
  - Abolish race
  - Ban cars<sup>5</sup>
  - Expropriate all private property without compensation
- A communist is likely to think that these policies should be considered desirable by the vast majority of people, but the reality is that most people are not accustomed to such possibilities and presently think of them as ‘extreme’. An advanced Marxist should understand that they are (at best) long-term goals that should manifest during ‘higher communism’, when several generations have adapted culturally and practicably to changes that take place by dint of living in a classless, technologically-advancing society with fully automated, publicly owned production.

Instead, our manifesto should read something along the lines of:

- (1) Sovereignty of the people and nation.
- (2) Continual progression towards the public ownership of all land, banks, production and services - via compensation for the last capitalists - enabling continually falling prices and rising economic independence for all.
- (3) A clean industrial, energy and farming revolution that *is* actually clean.
- (4) Full employment (including ‘earn as you learn’ trainee schemes).
- (5) A continually reduced working week and retirement age; revitalising independent creativity and craftsmanship.
- (6) Abolish exploitation and economic crises.
- (7) Universal education, health, social and child care, free at the point of access; and low-cost, highly accessible public transport.
- (8) Cancel all mortgages and personal debt.
- (9) Low-rent, high-quality housing for all.
- (10) A new democratic constitution - written by the people - enshrining the rights of humanity, in all its diversity. Obviously this is a draft to be tinkered with and each point would be fleshed out in some detail that we cannot go into here. Production and services will be progressively taken under public ownership, not all in one, impossible fell swoop, starting with the essentials that meet the most pressing needs of the masses: banks, electricity, water, gas, internet, waste services, mail, steel, heavy industry, mining and land, which farmers can lease back from the state. (Homelessness can be relatively quickly abolished by the state buying or seizing unused housing and building new social housing.) This way, we are less likely to bite off more than we can chew.

Outlined in point 2 (and 3, regarding farmers) is the offer to compensate the last capitalists via long-term debt payments - no problem for a system that, unleashed from the fetters of capital, will enormously raise productivity. (The end of previous modes of production have usually involved some form of compensation for the old masters. They will have to be expropriated without compensation if they refuse negotiation or reasonable offers, of course.) They should also be offered fulfilling jobs in social enterprises in the industries they presently work in or similar, in order to motivate them and retain any useful expertise, which is especially important in the case of farmers.

By taking this approach, we are trying to de-stress, as best as possible in extremely challenging circumstances, the minds of people who are presently anti-communist - again, that is most

people - by helping them to realise and understand that they have *everything to gain from communism*.

What works

Appealing to people’s better nature is another important tool. The vast majority of Germans who hid Jewish people in Nazi Germany did not put themselves forward to do so, but responded to being asked for help by desperate people, who made powerful emotional, human connections. Mao inspired the conversion of much of the captured nationalist rank and file by giving them the choice of fighting with the communists or going home.

What works often depends largely on historical material conditions more than ‘doing the right thing’. Slavery abolitionists in Britain made their biggest impact by pointing out the high numbers of white sailors dying on their way to and from the colonies. Attacking the slave *trade* made slave ownership more difficult, compelling slavers to better treat their slaves, paving the way for the humanisation and liberation of slaves. In the US, Abraham Lincoln eventually agreed to abolish slavery, because it became the only way to retain the union and prevent the loss of crucial agricultural land.

Communists (and radical leftists in general) are asking *a lot* of people. We need to spend a bit less time denouncing and lecturing - often reinforcing what we oppose - and a bit more time understanding and contextualising; appealing to people’s better nature and building trust, while convincing people of their personal historical importance. We need to sit down and show people with great clarity why they and their loved ones - including and especially their future grandchildren and great grandchildren - need communism. We need a bold vision - of abundance for all.

I am not deluded or naive. I do not think or claim that this approach can prevent a violent counterrevolution or that we can convert every fascist through ‘love-bombing’. Perhaps most actual fascists can never be converted - but there is a large middle strata that is wavering between the two poles. We have to make ourselves the more compelling draw.

The revolution, of course, will be defended militaristically to some or other extent (and it is also true that the dwindling capitalist class will lose, because capitalism is necessarily using up its ammunition quicker that it can be replenished). But the approach outlined is the best one for shortening the period and brutality of the counterrevolution. We will never know how successful we are with this approach. But to the purists who consider it idealistic, we have to consider the following:

- (1) Capitalism has not been overthrown before it has more or less historically exhausted itself (ie, before exchange value has all but withered away, as production has become almost completely fully automated). While it has produced enough value, capitalism has been able to produce and wield enough carrot and stick to sustain sufficient obedience and division among the majority of the working class.
- (2) The evidence from history’s revolutions (not just socialist ones) suggests capitalism will not be ‘overthrowable’ until the capitalist state is more or less unable to pay most state workers, including soldiers. It is common for the majority of state workers to continue to work for the new state. We cannot permanently alienate the majority of trained state soldiers. ‘Winning over the majority’ is no good if it does not have the *capacity* to defeat the minority.
- (3) Revolutions of the past have usually made not insignificant concessions ‘to the right’<sup>6</sup> or the old

ruling class in order to dampen the appeal of the counterrevolution. In Marx’s manifesto he predicts that a decisive portion of the capitalist class will at some point side with the new ruling class, the working class, just as a portion of feudal rulers - sensing that the wind was blowing in another direction and realising they could enrich themselves via the new, more productive mode of production - eventually sided with the then-revolutionary and ascending capitalist class. Our approach will foster this process by incentivising splits and defections and disincentivising rebellion.

(4) We also have to take into account the fact that we are trying to slow down and reverse global warming before it is too late and prevent a nuclear world war that is becoming increasingly possible, as capitalist competition intensifies over dwindling sources of profit. Diplomacy and negotiation will be vital tools.

In these circumstances, we have to try to make the world-historical process of transitioning to global communism as smooth and easy as possible. We have to make offers that cannot be refused. We will have to do this in incredibly difficult circumstances, during a period in which history through technological change is accelerating<sup>7</sup> - but we will have to stick to our guns, stay disciplined and ‘trust the process’ as much as possible throughout ●

Notes

<sup>1</sup>. Capitalism depends on fossil fuel, because its non-renewability renews the demand for capital investment, whereas renewable energy reproduces energy ‘infinitely’ and only requires

maintenance. Extractive and subtractive production (eg, metal milling) maximise labour intensity/exploitability - so socialism is needed to upscale renewable energy and additive production.

<sup>2</sup>. ‘More Americans than ever own stocks’: wsj.com, December 18 2023.

<sup>3</sup>. ‘The costs of rising short-termism’: etoro.com, February 9 2023.

<sup>4</sup>. ‘Investing statistics: how many people invest in the stock market?’: Finder.com, January 30 2025.

<sup>5</sup>. We are never actually going to ‘ban cars’, of course, but make people less and less dependent on them by ensuring that high-quality amenities are as localised as possible and public transport is highly efficient and accessible. We should actually appeal to (usually rightwing) car enthusiasts by explaining that such developments would improve their opportunities to practise independent craftsmanship and drive on regulated race tracks - rather than wasting the lives of their sports cars being stuck in traffic.

<sup>6</sup>. We do not propose selling out the rights of any minority or oppressed section of the working class for tactical gain; but nor do we wish to increase the amount of opposition and vitriol they face by drawing the line between ourselves and our enemies too close to our own feet, alienating convertible middle strata. This means that some transitional compromises to deal with incredibly complex issues (while working towards unity through education and struggle) may be necessary. Indeed, defending minority rights can mean defending or accommodating social conservatism. We would not deny Amish communities the right to cultural autonomy, for example. (This whole topic is obviously a minefield and cannot be worked out in this small space or even on paper in general - but in the process of historical evolution. Giving everyone the impression that they will be punished for every transgression, however mild, is certainly going to maximise the difficulty of the task ahead, though.)

<sup>7</sup>. After the steam engine was introduced, 61 years passed until productivity rose. That interval shrank to 32 years with electricity and 15 years with computers and the internet. For AI, JPMorgan estimates it will be less than seven years (‘AI will spark “violent task churn” in the economy, but even optimists may be underestimating the productivity boom, JPMorgan says’): Fortune.com, September 15 2025.

Online Communist Forum



Sunday October 12 5pm  
**Communism and trans liberation: a debate**  
**Mike Macnair (CPGB)**  
**Gabriel Perrault (Spartacist League/Britain)**

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

Organised by CPGB: [communistparty.co.uk](https://communistparty.co.uk) and  
Labour Party Marxists: [www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk](https://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)

**ORWELL**

# The road from Eton College

In the final article of his seven-part series, **Paul Flowers** grapples with a conundrum. Why did George Orwell, a self-proclaimed socialist, collaborate with the British state's anti-Soviet propaganda machine?

**T**he rightwing press had a field day with the discovery in 1996 of correspondence in the Public Record Office between Orwell and Celia Kirwan, who was a friend of Orwell's, the sister-in-law of Arthur Koestler and an employee of the Foreign Office's clandestine propaganda wing, the Information Research Department.<sup>1</sup>

The correspondence revealed that Orwell was asked in 1949 by the Foreign Office if he would help in the writing of material which could be used in its war of words against the Soviet Union. Orwell, terminally ill, turned down the invitation, but did provide the IRD with the names of 35 people, taken from a notebook containing 86 names. The papers repeated their celebrations two years later when the names in the notebook - or most of them - were finally revealed in Orwell's *Collected works*.<sup>2</sup> Once again, the right wing could claim Orwell as one of their own.

Why was he willing to collaborate with the murkier parts of the British state - the same sort of bodies which he had long denounced? Orwell was always a supporter of the lesser evil, and without ever renouncing his calls for the socialist transformation of Britain, he adopted a defencist stand during both World War II and the ensuing cold war, as he saw parliamentary democracy as a lesser evil than either a Hitlerite or Stalinist dictatorship. By the late 1940s, with Stalinist rule extending across eastern Europe, Orwell - by now a sick and pessimistic man - was willing to take whatever steps he felt were necessary to defend democratic rights in Britain. Furthermore, despite his suspicion of state institutions, he had no conception of the necessity for socialists to maintain their political independence from the state. This is why he was willing to make common cause with institutions that were bitter enemies of socialism, rather than propose a politically independent course.

In the covering letter to his list, Orwell stated that he wanted to help ensure that "unreliable" people would not be "worming their way into important propaganda jobs". Orwell admitted to Kirwan that her "friends", as he put it, probably knew all about those named by him, although he added that it was likely to be a good idea to have such "unreliable" people listed. He gave the example of Peter Smollett, an important official at the wartime Ministry of Information, who almost certainly had advised against the publication of *Animal farm*, and has since been revealed as a Soviet agent.<sup>3</sup>

The list itself is a strange collection. Only one, Smollett himself, actually was (as Orwell suspected) a Soviet asset. Many did not really require Orwell to point them out. EH Carr and Isaac Deutscher were not fellow-travellers, but were well known for dissenting from cold war orthodoxy. Some were well-known sympathisers of Stalinism, such as Walter Duranty, Sean O'Casey, Alexander Werth and commander Edgar Young; some, such as Tom Driberg and Kingsley Martin, had been soft on Stalinism; and others, including Michael Redgrave and JB Priestley, were politically naive individuals. Several were not exactly household names, such



**George Orwell: chose what he saw as the lesser evil**

as the scientists, PMS Blackett, JG Crowther and Gordon Childe, and the journalists, Alaric Jacob and Iris Morley, but it is very likely - and, with Blackett and Childe, a fact - that they were on the radar of the intelligence services.<sup>4</sup>

Whether they were Stalinists without a party card or credulous believers in a happy land, far, far away, the whole thing with most pro-Soviet writers and intellectuals was that they were *publicly* sympathetic to the Soviet Union. A glance through the contents pages of *Labour Monthly* and other Stalinist publications would have provided a better list of them, and there is little doubt that Kirwan's 'friends' regularly scanned them. The idea that the IRD would have commissioned any of them to write anti-Soviet material, or that they would have written any such thing, is laughable.

The rise of Stalinism posed a real problem for the left. Here was a state and a worldwide movement, emerging from a workers' revolution and using the liberatory language of Marxism, which was extremely repressive, particularly towards its leftwing opponents and the working class. How could the non-Stalinist left respond to it?

When an article by Trotsky on the Moscow Trials appeared without his approval in the rightwing US press, he nonetheless responded that he and his colleagues wanted to expose the lies of Stalin to the widest possible audience. Moreover, he stated: "If I should have to post placards, warning the people of a cholera epidemic, I should equally utilise the walls of schools, churches, saloons, gambling houses and even worse establishments."<sup>5</sup> One of Trotsky's last articles looked at the financial and secret police links between the Soviet Union and communist parties in Europe and America, and could quite easily have been used by the right wing against the 'official communist' movement.<sup>6</sup>

Other leftwingers, including Hugo Dewar, Peter Fryer and Walter Kendall, had articles presenting a leftwing critique of Stalinism published in rightwing journals such as *Encounter* and *Survey*. Victor Serge's *Destiny of a revolution* was promoted in Britain by the National Book Association - a rightwing rival to the Left Book Club.<sup>7</sup> None of this compromised the authors' principles, as they retained their political independence, and the

material published benefited the left more than the right.

Similarly, if leftwing anti-Stalinist material was used by the IRD or other western governmental bodies for their own ends, that did not necessarily reflect badly upon the authors.<sup>8</sup> There is, however, a difference between this and working with institutions which have always been hostile to the aims of the left, and with whom cooperation can only work against the interests of the left. Although Orwell had little to offer the IRD, the fact that he was willing to collaborate with it shows that he had strayed into unacceptable behaviour for anyone on the left.<sup>9</sup>

Stalinism needed to be fought within the labour movement, and the fellow-travellers had to be exposed as venal or gullible apologists for Stalin's regime. Nonetheless, this could only be done by a principled campaign that clearly differentiated itself from the right's anti-communism. Those who wished both to combat Stalinism and maintain their socialist principles could not do so unless they maintained their political independence from the British state and its agents on the right wing of the labour movement.

And, just as Orwell's theoretical limitations enabled his *Animal farm* and 1984 to be used by anti-communists around the world, they led him to collaborate with anti-socialist forces in Britain. He did not understand that the cause of socialism cannot be aided by collaborating with those who are its bitter enemies ●

## Notes

1. For a brief look at the IRD and its murky operations, see R Ramsay *The clandestine caucus: anti-socialist campaigns and operations in the British labour movement since the war* Hull 1998, pp6-7, 16-18.
2. G Orwell *Collected works* Vol 20, London 1998, pp240-59. Not all the names were released at the time; for the missing ones, see P Davison (ed) *The lost Orwell* London 2006, pp140-51.
3. G Orwell 'Letter to Celia Kirwan' *Collected works* Vol 20, p103.
4. D Caute *Red list: MI5 and British intellectuals in the 20th century* London 2022, pp222-34, 241-42.
5. L Trotsky 'On Hearst' *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1937-1938* New York 1976, p265.
6. L Trotsky 'The Comintern and the GPU' *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-1940* New York 1977, pp348-91.
7. V Serge *Destiny of a revolution* London 1937.
8. It also emerged that the IRD was promoting Orwell's *Animal farm* to the extent of considering an Arabic translation (*The Guardian* July 11 1996).
9. About the only mitigating factor would be if the IRD was presented to Orwell in a way that disguised its sinister nature.

## REVIEW

# Who is in control?

Paul Collier **Left behind: a new economics for neglected places** Penguin 2025, pp304, £10.99

This book offers an internationalist approach to our current crisis, and readers may find the information it provides useful.

Let us start with education. Paul Collier offers Estonia's arrangements as a model:

Estonia's system focuses on professional pre-school for the early years, where children learn to specialise: while Britain spends much less than the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development average on pre-school, Estonia spends much more. It delays primary school entry until seven. Once there, specialisation is prohibited until the age of 19, classes are usually mixed-ability and unstreamed, and there is an emphasis on activities that cut across subject boundaries. Far from being centrally controlled, the power of decisions over the curriculum is devolved to teachers and headmasters, with virtually no national testing, exclusion or inspections.

While British education has become more traditional, Estonia is continuously pioneering innovations, such as integrating virtual reality into classes. British schools are trapped in competition over their rank in national league tables; Estonia has no league tables and teachers are encouraged to visit other schools, learn from them and collaborate (pp82-83).

As the author says, these two approaches cannot both be right. But how to compare them? The OECD has a test - the Programme for International Student Assessment - at the end of secondary school. "Estonian schools get the best PISA score in Europe and beyond, beating North America, Japan and South Korea" (p83).

It is important to get the emphasis right, since a blind faith in 'market forces' is a sure-fire recipe for social collapse. This is the Achilles heel of messrs Ludwig Von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and others of that ilk:

While prices are the essence of the market forces invoked by Friedman, they cannot possibly



**Fossil fuel: Bełchatów power station, Poland**

coordinate the decisions among politicians, civil society, financiers, firms and households necessary to achieve renewal. Investors are more realistic than Friedman. They shift their money to the places that did not suffer collapse ... Collapse creates adverse expectations, which then become self-fulfilling (p19).

Such pessimistic expectations make one ask why Collier does not explicitly address what other savants have seen as 'stagflation': ie, a combination of inflation and stagnation. If the word accurately states the current condition of the global economy, then the prevalent pessimism threatens to become more widespread, as the anarchic responses of the likes of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, members of the Israeli governing coalition and other like-minded individuals produce further shocks.

### Provocative

Paul Collier's comments are wide-ranging and provocative. One of his targets is the fixation with gross domestic product (GDP), enthroned by the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) as an expression of the best obtainable income distribution, if it cannot benefit from an alteration in that distribution towards the affluent end of the social spectrum. Collier writes: "Diane Coyle is a rare wise voice who argues with devastating logic that, since Pareto efficiency is indifferent as to whether poor people end up losing

from a policy that increases GDP for others, it is unethical to use it as a criterion" (note, p44). He appears to be referring to Diane Coyle's book, *GDP: a brief but affectionate history* (Princeton, 2014).

Still on the subject of income distribution, pockets of deprivation that can be found in economies rich by GDP standards cannot be ignored either. This applies not only in the UK, but across the globe. For example,

Colombia is one of the most successful emerging market economies in Latin America. But Barranquilla, capital of the Atlantic Caribbean Region, is all too conscious that it has seen better days. It once felt modestly prosperous, but has now fallen behind the other parts of the country that are booming ... This springs from the silting up of the estuary on which it is situated (pp57-58).

"Meanwhile the capital, Bogotá, does well via mining and oil extraction," he adds (p60). The income distribution picture also needs to be offset by that of life chances:

Compare a student at Oxford - or Harvard - living on a modest scholarship against a youth of the same age who dropped out of school and is working long hours at Starbucks. The Gini coefficient will record the student as poorer than the guy who is serving him his coffee. But who envies whom? The student is on course to rise high in a community-of-success; the drop-out is heading for a community-of-humiliation (p69).

He goes on to suggest reasons for the marked inequality of life chances and incomes in the UK. Chief among the conclusions is that "Britain has spectacularly failed to invest in the vocational skills of its youth" (p79). This passage leads into the section on Estonian education mentioned above.

### Fossil fuels

Collier concedes that continued ruthless consumption of fossil fuels will gravely threaten the environment, but refuses to conclude that

... all unexploited fuel should be left in the ground. This might sound quite sensible ... but in fact it would be grossly unfair. Leaving unexploited resources untapped inflicts the largest burden on those least able to bear them. The question that climate activists should be asking is whose carbon fuels, like oil and coal, should be left in the ground? Should it be those of the rich, or those of the poor? Once posed, the question virtually answers itself: the list should be headed by the rich

carbon emitters like America's oil, Germany's coal and the gas of Qatar. To the extent that oil and gas still need to be used, they should come from those poorer, reserve-rich countries that are able to use them well (p180).

This begs the question of who controls the process: the extracting firms or the local governments? Surely the right way is to judge the situation of each individual state on its merits, and explain clearly to citizens just what each policy would involve, so that they can effectively decide. This means that we need a detailed 'post-capitalist plan' for the utilisation of such commodities - but he does not say that.

China also gets a mention - principally praise for Deng Xiaoping's turn away from the excesses of the Mao era and the chairman's personality cult which it fattered (see pp99-101). The original Basque cooperative, Mondragon, is also commended - and here we come upon a further weakness in the overall analysis, since, for all its success, its achievement has been merely to turn itself into a rival to the all-conquering multinational companies. Don't get me wrong: the Mondragon experience has much to teach (see p138). But Collier's fault is that, for all his robust and far-reaching analysis, he remains trapped in a capitalist mindset.

I hope I have written enough to prompt you, the reader, to engage with Collier's book. But it would be wrong of me to ignore other valuable traditions, which our rulers do not endorse - I mean the sequence, Paris Commune, Russia 1917, Spain, Venezuela. Each of these historical moments marked an advance, and, in the words of Marx and Engels, drew attention to "the line of march".

And we are still unable to dispense entirely with the state. As Paul Collier notes, in the immediate future we still need it - to collect taxes and help to deliver security. We must also demand that the states we live in evolve a common international plan to deal with the crisis, and ourselves advance proposals to that end. We have to rebuild a worthwhile, sustainable human community from the ground (even the seabed!) up ●

Chris Gray

## Fighting fund

### Do the necessary

Will our readers and supporters keep up the good work they've been doing recently in ensuring the *Weekly Worker* reaches our monthly £2,750 fighting fund target?

Let's hope so. And so far in October we're not doing too badly. £423 came our way over the last seven days, taking our running total up to £647 after eight days. Thanks to all the comrades who donated this week, but pride of place goes to AC for his fantastic £100. On top of that we had FK (£41), BO (£35), MM (£31), CG, DV and NH (£30 each), RG (£25), II (£20), RP, IS and RD (£12) and SM (£10).

All the above paid by bank transfer or standing order, while another five comrades clicked on our PayPal button: thank you, comrades MH (£10), TM, JN, NL and GP, all of whom contributed a fiver - as did comrade Hassan,

who handed his usual banknote to one of our team.

Meanwhile, comrade CF has taken out a new subscription and promised that his monthly standing order would include an extra donation. He writes: "I got handed a copy of the *Weekly Worker* at last week's meeting of Your Party. What a paper - just what the left needs!"

If you agree, do you fancy helping us raise the necessary cash to meet our rising costs? Go to the link below to see the different ways you can play your part. We rely on you, our readers and supporters, to see us home! ●

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)

## 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.

The *Weekly Worker* is licensed by November Publications under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Licence: [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode.en](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode.en)

ISSN 1351-0150

Sign up to CPGB news



[bit.ly/CPGBbulletin](http://bit.ly/CPGBbulletin)

# weekly Worker

**Palestinians  
must be free to  
determine their  
own future**

## 'First phase' will not bring peace

Negotiations between Hamas and Israel in Sharm El-Sheikh are likely to lead to a ceasefire and a prisoner exchange; however, Gaza's long-term future remains uncertain. **Yassamine Mather** explains why Donald Trump's 20-point plan is nothing more than colonialism dressed up as peace

**W**e are told that the indirect talks between Israel and Hamas, which began on October 6, have resulted in a "first phase" agreement. Israel will withdraw its forces to an "agreed-upon line" and Hamas will release its war captives and, soon, accept the transfer of power to a technocratic government of some kind.

However, far from offering a credible path toward a regional peace and Palestinian statehood, Donald Trump's 20-point US plan, the Gaza International Transitional Authority (Gita), is riddled with omissions, contradictions and slippery phrases.

Both Israel and Hamas have already rejected key long-term elements of it, and what remains appears less a framework - more a mechanism to entrench occupation under a new name. It carries the familiar hallmarks of Trump-brokered proposals - grandiose promises to bring a "strong, durable and everlasting peace" - but the substance is designed to extend imperial power and smooth the way for the Zionist plan to colonise the whole of Palestine.

The 'first phase' of the plan calls for an immediate ceasefire and the return of Israeli hostages, followed by Palestinian prisoner releases and resumed aid flows. This now appears to have been agreed. Yet crucial details are absent: there is no timeline or guarantee for Israeli withdrawal, no provision for disarmament oversight, and no clarity on who will be the so-called 'technocrats' governing Gaza. Even the fate of the 1.5-1.8 million displaced Palestinians - where they will live, how they will rebuild, and whether they will have any political rights during the reconstruction period - remains unaddressed.

### Imposed peace

In its current form, the proposal echoes the worst traditions of imposed peace. It replaces overt annexation with managerial control by what is called, in leaked documents, the Gaza International Transitional Authority - a body headed by Tony Blair and overseen by US and Gulf financiers. Palestinians are left as subjects of reconstruction, without even any pretence of consultation. If the Trump-Netanyahu plan represents an evolution from the earlier grotesque 'Riviera' fantasy, it is only in tone, not intention. The same colonial logic persists: Palestinians are to have no role in determining their fate.

The joint press conference on September 29 between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu announcing the 20-point plan to end the conflict was predictable: a calculated gesture designed to hide coercion and present it as diplomacy. It occurred at a time of growing international outrage over Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza. People have taken to the streets in their millions and governments have responded with a combination of gestures and oppression. In America there is plenty of oppression ... and



**Hamas armed wing, al-Qassam Brigades: not happy**

the 20-point plan is no more than a gesture.

Trump, frustrated with his failure to get a quick deal with Russia and an end to the war in Ukraine, perhaps seriously thinks he can bring peace to the Middle East ... and thus secure the Nobel Prize he covets. The 20-point plan was hailed as a breakthrough by the US and its allies. However, if you look at it closely, you will see it is little more than a recycled script. Like previous US-led proposals, it offers symbolic concessions, while institutionalising dependency. What was presented as an end to war is in fact a restructuring of control.

Netanyahu's own remarks on September 29 were full of threats, even when he tried to give reassurances. While stressing Israel's "right to security", he simultaneously endorsed the rhetoric relating to the 'cleansing' of Gaza under the guise of reconstruction. His political calculations were obvious: pacify his ultranationalist coalition, while appearing compliant with American dictates. Former US negotiator Brett McGurk, who does support the deal, observed that it "mirrored phase two of the earlier ceasefire deal implemented in January and terminated by Israel in March". What has changed is that it is repackaged and comes with lukewarm Arab endorsement.

Declaring that neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority would ever rule Gaza again, Netanyahu effectively undermined the plan's core premise. His stance confirmed that the deal's purpose was not any kind of reconciliation, but a *reoccupation* dressed up in diplomatic language. Israel's military would remain in most of Gaza indefinitely. In this way, Israel could continue its domination under the guise of international governance, while Trump could present it as a victory for peace.

### Acceptance

Hamas's acceptance of indirect negotiations in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt was driven less by hope than exhaustion. Facing catastrophic losses

and a starving population, the group agreed in principle to a ceasefire and the exchange of captives. True, instead of Tony Blair and Gita, Hamas proposes a technocratic administration made up of Palestinians. Yet even this 'defiance' was quickly coopted. Hamas had, after all, conceded a 'depoliticised reconstruction'.

Regional actors like Qatar, Egypt, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates pressured Hamas's political wing to participate in Sharm El-Sheikh, while Iran's cautious, late endorsement revealed how the Twelve Day War has changed the regional power balance. Iran is reeling under renewed sanctions and is terrified by the prospect of a renewed air assault by Israel (and perhaps the US). Even as the Hamas leadership sought to present participation as strategic pragmatism, critics within the Palestinian milieu have certainly described it as capitulation - one that risks formalising Gaza's transition from an occupied territory to a 'managed protectorate'. Reports suggest that the Hamas military wing, al-Qassam Brigades, is far from happy. Looking at the composition of Gita, it is easy to see why. Tony Blair's record - from the Iraq war to post-war privatisation - epitomises the failures of externally imposed governance. Then there is Aryeh Lightstone, Naguib Sawiris, Marc Rowan - each symbolising the increasing interventions of billionaires in politics!

Unveiling the Gaza 20-point plan coincided with intensifying tensions between Israel and Iran. Yet this too served US strategic aims: to maintain a region perpetually on edge, where ceasefire is celebrated as 'peace'.

The stand-off between Israel and Iran is no longer about intent, but anticipation. Having failed to restart nuclear negotiations with the US, Iran fears another pre-emptive Israeli strike, supported by the US. Though Iran's foreign-sourced weapons have proven ineffective, its domestic arms industry - one of its few successful post-shah institutions - has developed drones and missiles

that have prevented its collapse. Key assets include the Khorramshahr 4 missile, which has a 2,000-kilometre range and a 1,500-kilogram warhead. However, there is a strategic ceiling. These systems are insufficient to match the power of the US or Israel, meaning Iran's doctrine is likely limited to deterrence and the ability to retaliate and inflict wounds, not to win a full-scale war. The US is adamant that Iran should give up missiles with a range above 500 kilometres.

The Islamic Republic is also seeking military support from Russia and China to deter future attacks. However, the relationship between Iran and the Sino-Russian axis is one of strategic convenience rather than genuine alliance. Both Beijing and Moscow maintain a degree of distance from Tehran, driven by conflicting geopolitical priorities and a fundamental aversion to its Islamist ideology. Their reliability as partners is questionable too: Russia balances its ties with Iran against its strong relationship with Israel, while China's economic engagements with Iran's Arab neighbours and Israel far surpass those with Iran itself. This transactional dynamic was evident when Russia accepted Iranian drones for its war in Ukraine, but offered no support to Iran during its clashes with Israel. Furthermore, neither power has provided Iran with their most advanced military technology.

So this week, on the second anniversary of October 7, after two years of Israeli genocide in Gaza, military aggression in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Iran, and after countless political assassinations, we are looking at a Middle East very different from 2023.

Hezbollah has suffered a crushing defeat - both secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah and his successor were killed, much of its military and financial network was destroyed, and the group has been forced to withdraw north of the Litani river and hand over its weapons. Internal opposition in Lebanon to Hezbollah's armed presence is growing too.

In December 2024, Bashar al-Assad's regime collapsed, ending Iran's influence in Syria. Israel quickly moved into border areas, advancing to within 25km of Damascus. Syria is now fragmenting along sectarian lines - Druze, Sunni, Kurdish and Alawite.

Then Israel launched its Twelve Day War against Iran, destroying much of its air defences and missile programme. Iran's long-range strikes caused damage, but Israeli intelligence and cyber superiority proved decisive. Then in September, Israel carried out its missile strike in Doha from 15 aircraft - which, as it turned out, failed to take out the Hamas political leadership. Nonetheless, it was the first attack by Israel on a Gulf state ... and a step too far as far as Donald Trump was concerned. Using uncharacteristically diplomatic language, he said that the missile strike did not "advance Israel or America's goals." The "decision" to attack was made by Netanyahu: "it was not a decision made by me," he said, before praising Qatar as a "strong ally and friend". Note, late last month, Trump issued an executive order instructing the US military to take all "lawful and appropriate measures" to defend Qatar from any attack.

### Assessments

Historian Avi Shlaim believes Israel's current strategy aims to reshape the region's geopolitics through a broad regional war designed to secure military dominance across the Middle East - not only against Hamas but against all its neighbouring adversaries. Speaking to the BBC, he stated that these policies make it "highly unlikely that Saudi Arabia will join the normalisation agreements known as the Abraham Accords", adding that the countries which have already signed them are now "deeply angered" by Israel's conduct, even though they have little room to withdraw from those deals.<sup>1</sup>

Lebanese journalist Hazem Saghieh echoes Shlaim's assessment, arguing that Israel is moving toward greater extremes of bellicosity. Yet he stresses that, despite its battlefield successes, Israel has suffered "major moral defeats", as its global reputation has been gravely damaged.

As the region enters the third year since the October 7 attacks, the so-called Axis of Resistance is now little more than an empty shell. Israel, meanwhile, stands militarily triumphant and seemingly prepared for prolonged conflict on multiple fronts. But converting those military gains into a historically sustainable regional domination is surely impossible. America remains the global hegemon but its Arab allies in the Middle East are all deeply unpopular with their populations.

Revolution in Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and crucially Egypt, would change everything ●

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> [www.bbc.com/persian/articles/c0ez3vg7w21o](https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/c0ez3vg7w21o).