



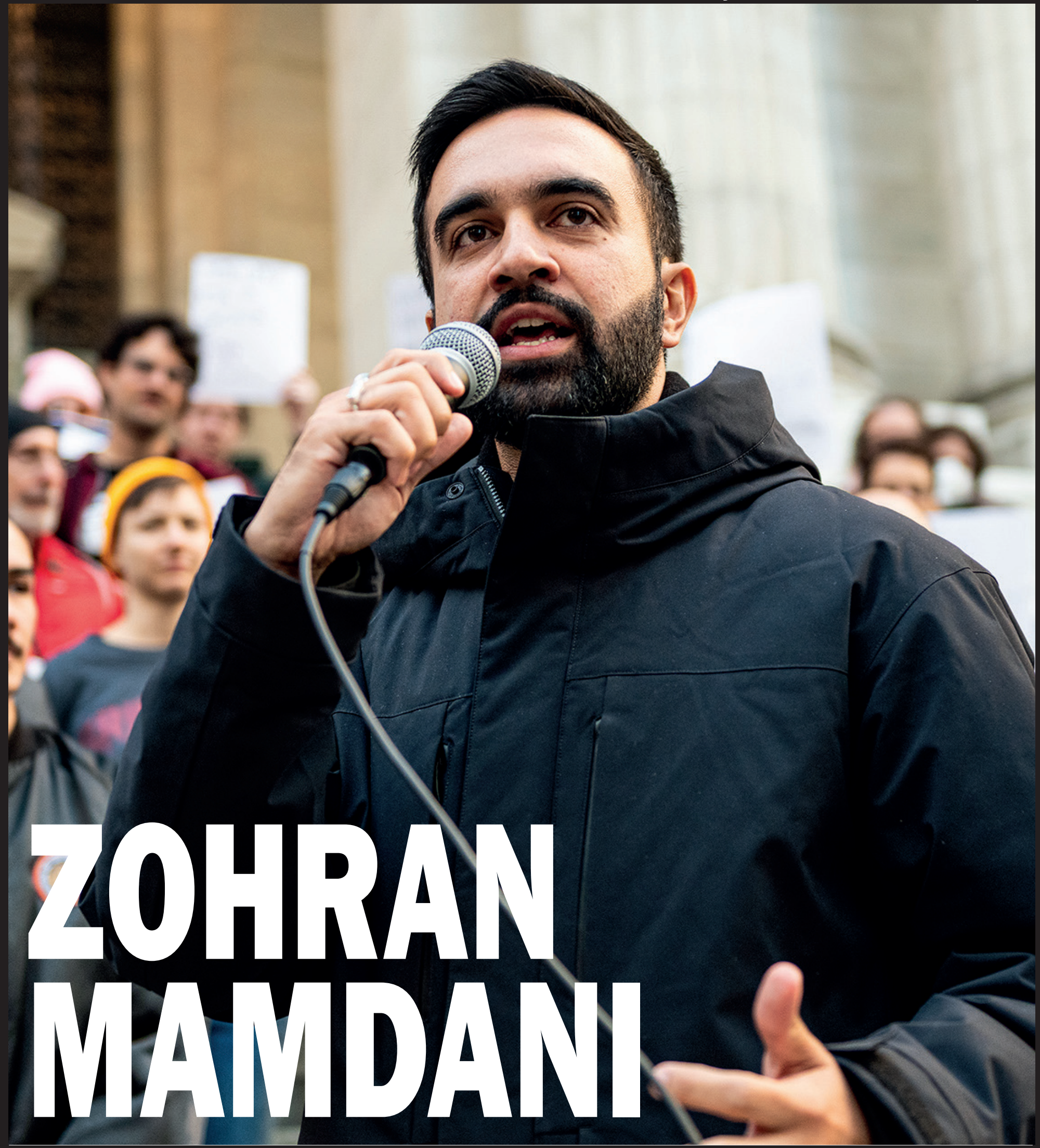
weekly worker



Getting ready for the Liverpool launch rally: no bans, no proscriptions, no quotas, no tokenism in Your Party

- Letters and debate
- Cop 30 hot air
- CPGB aggregate
- Trans liberation

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ZOHRAN MAMDANI

LETTERS



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

YP Plymouth

Your Party's regional assembly in Plymouth on Saturday November 8 was attended by around 70-80 people by my rough count - a fair few coming from the rest of Devon or around Cornwall. The demographics fairly strongly leaned towards 'older', but there were a dozen or so young people present.

I was there openly as a member of the Democratic Socialists of Your Party and handed out fliers with some of our proposed amendments ahead of the meeting, which were well received and commented on throughout the event. Other notable organisations present were the Democratic Bloc, who had a pile of printouts by the door (barely touched, mind you) and at least one person each from the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party in England and Wales, whose papers were being sold at the event.

We were told that the national leadership had not intended there to be a Plymouth assembly and that the local volunteers had planned to organise one on their own initiative, paying for everything out of their own pockets, and this was eventually 'officialised' by the national leadership. The meeting started with a video message from Corbyn and Sultana and then an explanation of the now familiar process of sitting in small circles, discussing each founding document in turn, with 'facilitators' taking notes and ensuring equal participation delivered by the seeming 'facilitator-in-chief', who only went by the name 'Crow'.

The discussion was then due to begin on the constitution, at which point Crow decided to replace the facilitator sitting in my circle, saying they'll be switching facilitators between the groups throughout (this didn't happen, as it turned out). The first topic was that of the name, since it was at the top of the constitution document and the discussion quickly turned to whether it should include 'Socialist' - the chief facilitator promptly interjected to reframe the question rather dishonestly as a "choice between new ideas and ways of doing things or old dogmas", and wanting to be openly socialist or communist apparently meant choosing the latter.

This set the tone for much of the assembly, with some at times rather hostile and dishonest framing of proposals being made. There was no realistic way to meaningfully discuss the documents section by section and instead the discussion was loose and unfocused, moving from topic to topic, depending on whatever was being brought up or caught people's eye when flicking through the documents. I felt the facilitators abused their position to dominate the conversation in groups and shape the narrative in order to lead to predetermined outcomes.

Multiple people admitted to not having read any of the founding documents and others expressed disinterest or being overwhelmed by the topics being discussed. Nonetheless people made the effort to start leafing through the documents and raised legitimate concerns about sections that jumped out to them, with the facilitator repeatedly dismissing

them as somehow already dealt with and not needing to worry ourselves about. Unfortunately these reassurances seemingly worked on some people, who were happy to accept that their 'well-meaning leaders have everything in hand'.

When concerns were raised about where our feedback and 'consensus positions' will go and what will happen to it, we were reassured that a black box 'algorithm' will create a 'word cloud' of the most popular suggestions that the 'sortitioned' at the founding conference will be able to discuss, much as we did today. When I asked how they are expected to turn that into a real founding document when they will only be attending for half a day before switching out with another set of sortitioned, or if they will just be expected to clap and cheer for whatever is placed in front of them, I was told by Crow that they will amend them by consensus and they will be voted on online, while referring to the founding conference verbatim as the "national rally".

Undeniably the general mood was often quite conservative and tailist, seeking lowest-common-denominator politics. Labourism is still hegemonic in Plymouth and, unlike what the reports from some other assemblies have indicated, there was very little anger at the leadership over the founding process. Instead there was actually an applauded statement of gratitude to Jeremy Corbyn and "that other one" (presumably Zarah Sultana) for "giving people hope and making this happen". There were numerous warnings against using the word 'socialism', as it would be "exclusionary" - so people need to be tricked and led by the nose to our politics by stealth. There was pushback to this from people who saw that dishonesty can only lead to losing people's trust and that not calling ourselves socialists or communists won't stop the media from calling us such - a chief concern of the 'soft left' types present. A number of statements seemed generally hostile to politics as such, calling for us to be 'less political', to not be a party at all, etc.

Despite this several of our demands were very positively received, achieving 'consensus'. These included the demand that MPs receive a workers' wage, for 50% of members fees to go to local branches, for regional bodies to only be established bottom-up rather than top-down, for the central executive committee to exclude MPs and council people altogether and be fully member-led, or at least not have reserved positions for them, as well as opposition to witch-hunts and bans on membership of other organisations. Opposition to stewardship of the party by the Independent Alliance MPs after the conference was also met with support, as were calls not to join coalitions or enter government with other parties, so that we are not left managing capitalism and implementing austerity.

The political statement was broadly panned, but with different reasons given. Some groups described it as lacking detail, and in dire need of a concrete definition of socialism, making explicit opposition to capitalism, commitment to defence of trans people and migrants in particular, and explicit opposition to Zionism and support for Palestine, while

other groups criticised it for being too long, vague and repetitive, favouring instead a two paragraph max commitment to "social justice and equality".

Opinions on the leadership were also mixed: while it seemed no-one supported a single leader, there were differences of opinion on whether co-leaders or collective leadership would be better, with the position of "at least two" being settled on. Several groups had discussions on the use of sortition, with some seemingly ending up divided (some were against, while others were in favour), with two or three groups even feeding back that they supported sortition for all future conferences.

Ahead of the final section of the assembly, when each group would have a spokesperson providing feedback to the rest of the assembly on what their group had discussed, it seemed for a moment that I would be the one delegated to speak - at which point Crow suddenly became concerned that it would be better for a woman to speak and pressed the microphone into the hands of an unwilling attendee instead, who graciously passed the microphone to me after introducing some of our group's points.

Given this, it was unsurprising when it turned out later that the volunteers setting up the assembly were drawn from Roger Hallam's Assemblée: hence a total hostility to votes of any kind, and really to politics as such, plus lots of horizontalist consensus-building and 'assemblies', consisting of trading anecdotes over tea and biscuits. Perhaps most disappointingly of all, the assembly concluded with no move to gather people's contact details or establish a local branch of at least the attendees local to Plymouth. Instead we were treated to an impromptu slam poetry recitation and invitations to 'another assembly' next week - this time with glossy leaflets from Assemblée advertising it as their own event unconnected to Your Party.

As a final comment on the assembly format as such, the event structure didn't really let people mingle outside their small groups and no concrete amendments or proposals were made that I have any trust will make any impact on the founding process. Rather than people walking away with any warm feelings of shared purpose and community, more than anything else it felt atomising and isolating.

Rafal B
Plymouth

Trust the media

Following their role model - minister for Nazi propaganda Joseph Goebbels - the neo-fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD) never grows tired of accusing the democratic media of being "the lying press". Then as now, the goal is to sow distrust in the media and to spread the perception that it broadcasts disinformation and conspiracy theories - or better: conspiracy fantasies.

The real Nazis of the 1930s, as well as today's neo-Nazis and rightwing populists, know full well that in modern democracies the role of the media in democratic opinion-forming processes remains crucial. Without a free press, there is no democracy. Destroy the media, and you can destroy democracy - that seems to be the strategy.

For any democratic orientation,

citizens need information they can trust. If this information is incorrect, deliberately falsified or manipulated, democracy has a problem. In other words, people must trust the media and rely on it as part of the democratic decision-making process.

Yet the relationship between information and trust itself can become problematic - especially when information is no longer solid, or when people no longer trust it. Through far-right propaganda, a wealth of false information circulates online, spreading easily, widely and rapidly. At the same time, TV channels and newspapers - despite some shortcomings - remain largely reliable sources, as established journalism continues to offer quality reporting.

To discredit this, the far right has popularised the expression, 'fake news', applying it to various forms of dubious or false information. Politicians such as Donald Trump have also used 'fake news' as a weapon to discredit opponents and unsupportive media. Meanwhile, social science distinguishes between false misinformation, which may be based on error, and disinformation, which is deliberately spread.

Conspiracy theories - conspiracy fantasies - are a special form of disinformation. They are semi-plausible narratives, used to explain evil by attributing it to a powerful and clandestine actor, who supposedly conspires with others and is allegedly responsible for social ills or catastrophes.

If the impression takes hold that fake news lurks everywhere and that established journalists are manipulating the population - as the 'lying press' narrative claims - the vital mechanisms of democratic publicity are undermined. Survey data from countries such as the USA or France have indeed shown declining confidence in established media in recent years. In many of these countries, the political public sphere is more polarised than in Germany, making it easier for ideological camps to form around specific media outlets. In such environments, far-right 'filter bubbles' foster selective trust - while democratic media are framed as part of an opposing camp, accused (as Trump constantly does) of spreading "fake news".

The situation in Germany is somewhat different, although tendencies toward political and media polarisation have also existed here for years. The neo-fascist AfD in particular has altered public debates. Nevertheless, there remain cohesive forces at the centre of the political system and public life that have, so far, limited the extent of polarisation.

Germany's multi-party system tends to push political parties toward the centre. And, when it comes to major issues - environmental crises, health concerns, political scandals or economic instability - most Germans still tend to trust the media. This is precisely why the AfD constantly attacks Germany's public broadcasting system. However, changes are visible - the AfD's anti-media propaganda has had some effect. In previous years, trust levels hovered around 70%; now they have declined to 61%. Far-right propaganda is working - to some extent.

Rightwing propaganda manifests in the accusation of the 'Lügenpresse'. This has been promoted by far-right populists and extremist actors in Germany

- especially since 2014-15, during former chancellor Angela Merkel's refugee policy - and it played a central role in the far-right Pegida platoons. In the most recent survey (end of 2024), 20% nationwide agreed with the statement that the German media "systematically lie" to the population - up from 14% two years earlier. Neo-Nazi and AfD propaganda is working. About one in five people in Germany holds an extremely negative view of the media's work - a phenomenon media experts call media cynicism.

For journalists - many of whom see themselves as factual, critical observers and as a counterweight to the far right - such insinuations are frustrating, even if only a minority endorses them. Still, there is approval of some well-known conspiracy fantasies in Germany. For example:

- the claim that the terrorist attacks of September 11 were instigated by the US government;
- that 9/11 was staged by the USA itself; or
- that pharmaceutical companies release pathogens to boost drug sales.

The proportion of Germans who believe in such conspiracy fantasies is consistently lower than those who assume collusion between politics and the media. Belief in conspiracy fantasies fluctuates, but has declined over time. Only about 6% consider it "probably true" or "certainly true" that the USA staged 9/11. Meanwhile, around 9% of Germans believe the rightwing extremist theory that there is a "strategy for the abolition of the German people" driving immigration. Belief in conspiracy fantasies and approval of media cynicism are both more widespread among AfD supporters than among those who sympathise with democratic parties - no surprise there.

Unsurprisingly, younger and less-educated people are often more careless about verifying their information sources - and less able to distinguish far-right misinformation from factual reporting. Encouragingly, however, Germany's 18-29-year-olds show higher confidence in democratic media than older generations.

Many Germans are aware of the problems posed by digital platforms, Telegram groups and 'alternative' rightwing media. A large portion of the population recognises misleading news and understands the need to be cautious about certain sources. Most people also draw from multiple sources of information. Germany's public broadcasting services remain a cornerstone of the country's media stability - which, by international standards, remains high, though showing a slight decline in confidence.

Overall, despite all the negative developments - the influence of the neo-fascist AfD, neo-Nazis and rightwing propaganda - Germany's overall news consumption remains relatively stable. So far, the neo-fascist AfD - unlike their great idol, Joseph Goebbels - has not succeeded in convincing the German public that the country's democratic news outlets and quality media are 'the lying press'.

Unfortunately, this does not mean the AfD will stop trying to annihilate Germany's public broadcasting system, to infiltrate and hollow it out from within, or to continue its relentless campaign to discredit and manipulate the country's democratic media.

Thomas Klikauer

Germany

USA

The party and the hangover

Zohran Mamdani's victory in New York's mayoral election is well-deserved and rightly celebrated. But the American left must insist on accountability, writes **Paul Demarty**

It was a hell of a party, and rightly so. Last Tuesday, voters trooped to the polls to elect the mayor of New York City, and a majority of them pulled the lever for Zohran Mamdani, a charismatic young state senator and avowed democratic socialist. That after a year-long campaign, which he began at 1% in polls for the Democratic Party primary. His victory speech was decorated with flowery quotes from India's first premier Jawaharlal Nehru and Eugene Debs, the renowned Socialist Party of America presidential candidate in the early 20th century.

Mamdani's voters had been told all along that it was hopeless, that his politics were onto a loser, that he was only attractive to downwardly-mobile professionals and had nothing to offer anyone else. By capturing more than 50% of the vote on a historic turnout, he silenced his critics (or would have done, if these critics had been less in love with the sound of their own voices). He topped the polls among almost all demographic categories, barring the rich and the remaining 'white ethnic' enclaves in the outer boroughs and Staten Island.

How did he do it? There are positive and negative factors. Firstly, the positive: Mamdani had an army at his disposal. The New York chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America is the organisation's largest, and is largely partisan to the sort of social democratic strategy he espoused. His opponents could not match that. Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa, an eccentric cat-loving vigilante, had no such organisation, and in reality was always a no-hoper. It is not that long ago that New York returned Republican mayors, but it feels like centuries, and a holy fool like Sliwa is not the man to change it, as oddly endearing as he is as a character. Former Democratic governor and independent mayoral candidate Andrew Cuomo, meanwhile, betrayed bafflingly little interest in the 'ground game' at all.

Mamdani also had a programme, which consisted of a handful of concrete measures, aimed at increasing the affordability of life in New York. These included free buses, a rent freeze for a large number of apartments, and the opening of state-run grocery stores - one in each of the five boroughs. He hammered away at these issues constantly - the rent is too damn high, groceries are too damn expensive. He succeeded in exposing his opponents' attempts to set up a culture war as mere diversions.

He did so for the last of the positive reasons: Mamdani is a natural. He is a good speaker from a platform, and equally comfortable talking to regular Joes and Josephines on the street. He can be funny, but not flippant; he can be serious, but not pompous. He speaks with the freedom of one who has not spent his life grovelling his way up the Democratic greasy pole, in the hope than one day he might achieve the lofty heights of morally desiccated apparatchikdom *à la* Cuomo. He is, let's be frank, a good looking young guy with a winning smile.

Opponents

Which brings us, by way of contrast, to the negative reasons for his victory. He was very fortunate in his opponents. We will mostly leave Sliwa aside here - he never had a prayer. Apart from him, Mamdani faced Cuomo and the



New York City DSA: biggest chapter by far

incumbent mayor, independent Eric Adams - another slightly cracked individual, whose tenure has been dogged by corruption scandals, particularly involving the Turkish state. Adams was likewise a no-hoper: charges against him were dismissed by Donald Trump's Department of Justice 'without prejudice' (ie, they could always be brought back), in order to ensure compliance with Washington's diktat, and New York voters knew it.

Avowed socialist

The division of the anti-Mamdani vote was thus a serious problem for the political elite, for whom a municipal breakthrough for an avowed socialist and one who refused to bend the knee to Israel was a calamitous prospect. Adams was successfully manoeuvred into pulling out, but Sliwa remained. He notably refused to join in the catastrophising.

Establishment hopes were pinned on Cuomo then, and in him they had exactly the candidate they deserved. He seemed to regard the earlier primary as his birthright, and seems not to have really understood how resented he was in NYC for his repeated shafting of the city as state governor.

It is not clear how heavily his old scandals - allegations of sexual harassment, and his decision to send elderly Covid patients back into nursing homes early, which resulted in hundreds of additional deaths - weighed on the public mind. (Sliwa at least remembered - 'slappin' fannies and killin' grannies', he quipped of Cuomo's reign early in the campaign.) In any case, he failed to up his game, and relied largely on scaremongering about the malign intentions of his Muslim socialist opponent. He was everything his opponent was not: bitter, entitled, politically rudderless, shrivelled like a prune.

The contrast with the earlier

presidential primary challenges of Bernie Sanders was obvious. In 2016, his opponent, Hillary Clinton, successfully used control of the party machinery to ensure victory; in 2020, Democratic grandees like Barack Obama prevailed upon a united 'moderate' ticket for Joe Biden. In New York, the Democrat party elites were caught flat-footed and, having lost the primary, proved incapable of a unified response.

As a result, New Yorkers are to have mayor Mamdani in Gracie Mansion. He is likely to face serious challenges and, since he is identified with the socialist left, those challenges are ours too.

At the end of the day, despite his convincing victory, Mamdani is not considered a legitimate political leader. Ham-fisted attempts to defeat him will now be transformed into a campaign of sabotage. Having won fair and square, he must now be seen to *fail*, and fail badly. In order to ensure this outcome, the enemies of socialism in America have many mechanisms.

The central problem is that the NYC mayoralty is not actually that powerful a position. Much authority resides with the governor - it was precisely this power that Cuomo exploited in order to undermine the liberal mayor, Bill de Blasio, some years ago. Yet Mamdani has bigger problems even than that, as the federal government in Trump's second term is openly weaponised against cities who vote the 'wrong' way. Militarised deployments of ICE agents, and perhaps the National Guard, are likely to follow. On current evidence, it is not clear what, if anything, mayors can do to protect their citizens from the predations of these loathsome thugs.

The city government has little power to raise revenue through direct taxation, which means that fundraising for Mamdani's flagship social programmes depends on the selling of municipal bonds. It is quite certain that access to the bond market can be

interfered with; indeed, manoeuvres of this sort radically curtailed the autonomy of New York City back in the 1970s.

Mamdani will, furthermore, face the constant and open hostility of both the rightwing and notionally 'liberal' media - the *New York Post* and *New York Times* alike. The gutter racism of the campaign is set to continue. Despite his conciliation of the New York City Police Department - he is to retain Adams's NYPD commissioner, Jessica Tisch - we know that it is a fearsome institution, which has passively resisted earlier mayoral attempts at reform with some success.

Temptations

That is the stick, but there is also the carrot - of absorption into Democratic machine politics. His victory was hailed by Obama (though notably snubbed by many other Democratic power brokers). The Democrats needed people like Mamdani, he said, as well as people like Abigail Spanberger, the long-time CIA agent who won the Virginia governor's race the same day.

Mamdani intends to keep his campaigning apparatus going, presumably as some sort of non-profit. It may or may not bring him some benefit, or just become yet another make-work outfit for aspiring political operatives, but the point is that by doing so he insulates himself from political pressure from the DSA, which under relatively more leftwing leadership in recent years has made some hesitant efforts to demand more from its 'electeds'. Of course, the structure of American politics - and its Bonapartist tilt towards the executive - makes mayors the petty princes of their cities, hard enough to challenge at the best of times.

With judicious application of carrot and stick, the next four years may look like this: sabotage forces Mamdani to moderate; organised leftwing opinion deserts him; but there, waiting in the

wings, are various Democrat bigwigs. 'We need people like you,' they will say. 'This is an anti-systemic moment; it is not the hour of Chuck Schumer. Just keep a lid on the Israel-Palestine stuff - what concern is it of yours anyway? - and keep your nose clean with the NYPD.'

Democratic fold

There are real doubts as to whether the Democratic Party has the requisite agility to pull it off. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a previous insurgent DSA winner in New York, would be far better ensconced in the mainstream-Democratic fold by now, if party elites did not keep stifling her for no discernible reason, when it comes to committee appointments and such. Yet the danger is there. We cannot assume that the Democrats' present pathetic state of senility will continue. They have been so badly beaten in recent history that a changing of the guard is all but inevitable.

There is much to celebrate in Mamdani's victory: though it is a local election, New York is no ordinary locality. It is the most populous city in the US, and this is the most telling electoral victory for anyone who styles himself a socialist in America for many decades, if not ever. He burst through firewalls directed at keeping socialists and anti-Zionists from office by mobilising an electorate impressive in its demographic diversity. It can be done again.

That makes the possibility of his being defeated, coopted or both all the more perilous. It would be less so if there existed a strong enough organisation of socialists to truly hold representatives to account - to give them the choice of loyalty or certain political oblivion. That would be a party, which the DSA certainly is not yet •

paul.demarty@weeklyworker.co.uk

CLIMATE



Hypocrisy and hot air

No wonder there is anger and frustration. With no official US presence at Cop30, it is inevitable that the 1.5°C target set in Paris will not be met, writes **Eddie Ford**

This week saw the start of the Cop30 climate conference in the northern Brazilian city of Belém, known as the gateway to the Amazon - president Lula da Silva even signed a law that symbolically transferred the capital from Brasília to the city during the period which is due to end on November 21.

Of course, given that you might as well start as you mean to go on, it was widely reported that the conference was used as an excuse to build a new four-lane highway cutting over eight miles through the protected rainforest - which saw strong opposition from the local indigenous communities and an attempt by protesters to storm the conference.

Indeed, providing yet another illustration that behind the symbolism - the token youth, women and first nation delegates - it is business as usual, Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, was given permission last month to drill near the mouth of the Amazon. The environmental watchdog, Ibama, had originally denied it a licence because of concerns about inadequate planning to protect wildlife in case of an oil spill, but came under intense pressure to back down.¹ Even though he has a much vaunted image of being a global leader on climate change, Lula da Silva - once the darling of the soft left - accused Ibama of acting as if it was "against the government" and insisted the oil revenues will help fund Brazil's climate transition, which is obvious madness.

Consensus

As a protest against greenwashing and carbon-offset mechanisms, the Spanish artist, Josep Piñol, transformed his cancelled *Evitada* ('Avoided') project - originally conceived as a massive sculpture for Belém - by issuing symbolic carbon credits for the 57,765 tonnes of CO₂ emissions that were 'avoided' by not producing the sculpture.² This seems like a more fitting testimony to the Belém circus.

Meanwhile, Australia and Türkiye are vying to host Cop31 - but if there is no agreement, it will default to Bonn. (It has already been decided that Cop32 will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.)

Sir Keir Starmer and other leaders attended the pre-conference summit between November 6 and 7 ahead of the official climate talks, with the heir apparent, William Windsor, tagging

along to provide royal prestige. Starmer warned that the "consensus is gone" on climate change, but apparently the UK was still "all in". Nevertheless, do not expect him to defy the most powerful climate denialist on the planet, Donald Trump, who is not even sending an official team to Belém - though you did get an 'alternative' delegation from the likes of Californian governor Gavin Newsom and New Mexico's governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, organised by coalitions such as America Is All In, Climate Mayors and the US Climate Alliance.³

Last year at Cop29 in Baku, it was agreed for "all actors to work together" to enable the scaling up of financing to developing countries for climate action to at least \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035 - but expect major disagreements. Brazil intends to launch the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) as a "signature achievement", since the \$125 billion "blended-finance investment fund" aims to reward forest conservation in tropical countries.

The host country's main proposal is a Climate Coalition, which is supported by a market-orientated group of academics around the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that wants a carbon price floor of \$50 per tonne of CO₂. The plan is to create a global emissions cap, beginning at a level close to current emissions rate, and then reducing it until reaching net-zero by 2050, meaning that for an activity which creates emissions people would buy allowances - and, as the cap decreases, the cost of the allowances will increase, creating an incentive for decarbonisation.

Other matters on the agenda, which perhaps surprisingly was agreed upon very early on, include final rules for carbon markets and efforts to create a "just transition", looking at how governments and the private sector can put people at the centre of national and sectoral transitions. Even though the planet's past 10 years have been the hottest in recorded history, there is the vexed question of governmental climate action plans - known as 'Nationally Determined Contributions' under the Paris agreement. Fewer than a third of the world's states - 62 out of 197 - have sent those in and, from those NDCs received so far, there is an expectation of a 10% reduction in emissions. But that falls woefully short of the

minimum 60% fall necessary to stay within the 1.5°C target.

Another question that *needs* to be urgently raised is methane - a greenhouse gas 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide, and responsible for about a third of the warming recently recorded. Cutting it would supposedly amount to an 'emergency brake' on global temperatures, and at Cop26 in Glasgow in 2021 the UK, the US, the EU and other countries forged the global methane pledge - requiring a cut in methane of 30% by 2030, with 159 countries subsequently signing up. Yet, as data from satellite analysis clearly shows, emissions from some of the main signatories have actually increased. Emissions collectively from six of the signatories - the US, Australia, Kuwait, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Iraq - are now 8.5% above the 2020 level.

Momentum

Unsurprisingly, popular faith in the UN climate process is faltering. As shown by the NDCs and the disastrous rise in methane production, they are mired in complacency. For instance, given that we are in Belém, industrial scale beef production is responsible for 80% of deforestation in the Amazon. This results in a massive degradation of biodiversity and, of course, a massive increase in methane. Needless to say, amongst the 30,000 people attending Cop30 there are thousands of big business representatives (generally they are categorised as coming from NGOs, but we know too that many are there to lobby on behalf of the fossil fuel industry).

Yes, we had the Paris conference 10 years ago, followed by an agreement to keep global surface temperature to "well below" 2°C above pre-industrial levels, "preferably" keeping the limit of the increase to only 1.5°C - which appeared to be the consensus referred to by Starmer. However, the *geopolitical context* has almost completely changed, with the rise of various rightwing and far-right governments, parties and movements that deny the reality of human-induced climate change and have a commitment to fossil fuel expansion - principally in the White House.

But, if you look at the graphs, studies and all the available public data, we are at 1.5°C *now* and edging above, because we are dealing with a global *system* - something equivalent to the often-used metaphor of an oil

tanker that you simply cannot turn around. You cannot rewrite the laws of physics. Hence the momentum is there to get warmer and warmer. The danger, of course, is precisely that, as the planet gets warmer, more and more fresh water goes into oceans and you get feedback. All that in spite of the world being very *successful* in turning to wind power and solar energy - whatever blinkered assurances you get from Donald Trump or Nigel Farage.

In fact, worldwide solar and wind-power generation has outpaced fossil fuels this year and, for the first time on record, renewable energies generated more power than coal, according to a new analysis by the energy think tank, Ember.⁴ Global solar generation grew by a record 31% in the first half of 2025, while wind by 7.7% - meaning that solar and wind generation combined grew by more than 400 terawatt hours, which was more than overall global demand increased in the same period.

At the same time, China's carbon dioxide emissions have been flat or falling for 18 months.⁵ China added 240GW of solar capacity in the first nine months of this year, and 61GW of wind, putting it on track for another renewables record in 2025. Last year, the country installed 333GW of solar power, more than the rest of the world put together. The obvious deduction is that it is perfectly possible to wean off polluting sources of power, as demand for electricity skyrockets, so long as investment in renewables, including solar, wind, hydropower, bioenergy and geothermal energies, continues. We can keep pace with the growing demand for electricity worldwide if there is planning and political will.

But the momentum is still there in terms of global warming. As things look at the moment, there is no reason to believe that it is possible to limit global temperature to "well below" 2°C - everything points to the opposite, and that is now 'officially' recognised. Hence António Guterres, the secretary general of the United Nations, recently acknowledged it is now "inevitable" that humanity will overshoot the Paris target with "devastating consequences" for the world, including the danger of passing catastrophic "tipping points" in the Amazon, the Arctic and the oceans.⁶ Therefore it is "absolutely indispensable" to change course to make sure that the overshoot is as short and as low in intensity as possible to avoid tipping points that

see the Amazon become savannah.

We have just had what surely should be a warning sign from Hurricane Melissa in the Caribbean and the utter devastation it brought - a Category 5 hurricane that moved *slowly* over land, going at five miles an hour, but with winds of *185mph* at its most sustained. Climate scientists have said the intensification of Melissa that saw the winds doubling from 70mph to 140mph in just a day is most likely a symptom of the rapid heating of the world's oceans. In other words, if you did not have industrialisation, the storm would not have been as severe.

Trump's ear

However, to avoid runaway global heating requires a radical break from the current system of 'production for the sake of production'. Doubtless that is why Bill Gates, one of the world's richest men, now calls for a change of emphasis, away from attempting to meet what are now hopeless targets to adapting to a hot world. Music to Trump's ear.⁷ Gates considers himself an engineer, a tech-wiz, of course. He freely admits that he has no real grasp on politics. So he is perhaps incapable of even thinking about a change in the social system.

True, we are witnessing "a renewables revolution" and "the transition will inevitably accelerate" - but fossil fuels remain at the front and centre of the modern military machine (aircraft, tanks and ships run on petrol). Moreover, fossil fuels remain incredibly profitable (and provide oil and gas rich states with a big percentage of their tax revenues). Hence, everywhere it's still: "Drill, baby, drill" ●

eddie.ford@weeklyworker.co.uk

Notes

1. theguardian.com/world/2025/oct/20/brazil-greenlights-oil-drilling-amazon.
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MEDIA

Heads roll at BBC

We should not join the rightwing attacks - that almost goes without saying. But the idea that the BBC objectively reports anything is a myth. We need our own, working class, media, says **Yassamine Mather**

Resignations of the BBC's director general and the head of BBC News can only be understood as an attempt to appease rightwing opinion, the Tory front bench and now, of course, Donald Trump. It certainly leaves in tatters the BBC myth that it objectively reports politics. It never has and never will.

In fact, the BBC is a loyal servant of the capitalist establishment in Britain (which ultimately means loyalty to Washington and the Atlantic alliance). Having said that, we should not join in the celebrations and the continued rightwing press and media attacks. What they have in mind is replacing the BBC with private outlets far to its right, full of superficial, inaccurate and sensational nonsense. The aim is to replace this partially state-funded and state-controlled corporation, because it obstructs their dream of a fully privatised, for-profit broadcasting outlet like GB News or Fox News.

This latest crisis started with what appears to be clumsy editing.

The *Daily Telegraph* - or the *Torygraph*, as many people call it, cried foul over a cut-and-paste job on a Trump speech. This was the pretext needed for the White House to label the BBC broadcast "fake news" and unleash a ferocious attack - a process that has so far cost the jobs of director-general Tim Davie and news editor Deborah Turness. By November 11 Trump's legal team had written to the BBC, giving them until November 14 to apologise and "appropriately compensate" him. This followed Trump's threat to sue for \$1 billion.

White House

No doubt the editing was shoddy, but we live in a media landscape drowning in genuine disinformation from the right - and in that the White House and the US administration excel anyone else. So how come this specific 'technical failure' became a weapon? Because the BBC's real crime in the eyes of the conservative wing of the ruling class is not that it is too 'leftist', but that it remains attached to the old neoliberal consensus.

The search for blood started by the *Torygraph* was naturally supported by the *Daily Mail*, *The Sun*, etc, which have campaigned for decades to dismantle the BBC. We also had the usual rightwing cabal - Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, Kemi Badenoch, Tommy Robinson, etc - falling over themselves to prove their loyalty to their American masters.

And the BBC, as always, has complied. It is an institution geared for submission. Under Davie - let us not forget a former Tory candidate in local elections and later vice-president of marketing and franchise at PepsiCo - the BBC had already accelerated its own managed decline. His time will be remembered as one defined by brutal cuts, a crackdown on staff "virtue-signalling" in late 2020 when the BBC introduced stricter guidelines on social-media participation for its staff - especially journalists and those in news/current affairs. This was the process used to force sports presenter Gary Lineker to resign, after he dared express opposition to Israeli genocide.

The entire narrative of a 'woke', 'leftist' BBC is a well-rehearsed and calculated lie - a smokescreen to force the broadcaster to cower. The truth is the BBC's upper echelons are dominated by Tory grantees and capitalists. For example:

■ Richard Sharp: former chairman, Tory donor and the banker who



Broadcasting House: right want privatisation

facilitated a secret loan for Boris Johnson.

■ John McAndrew: current director of programmes for BBC News, who was poached directly from GB News. Senior presenters have included:

■ Andrew Neil: a Murdoch-era hatchet man who chaired the hard-right *Spectator*, while a BBC flagship presenter, before founding the reactionary GB News.

■ Nick Robinson, who was president of the Oxford University Conservative Association in 1980s...

Another important figure is Robbie Gibb, former head of communications for Theresa May, who has been described as an "active agent of the Conservative Party" inside the BBC. Alan Rusbridger, writing in *Prospect*, tells us:

Sir Robbie is a stickler for what he regards as impartiality. He is reported to have told *Newsnight* staff that if they "wanted to peddle their own agendas, they should 'get stuffed and leave'."

But he is a curious figure to have emerged as the ultimate arbiter of impartiality at our venerable public service broadcaster. There is, he would be the first to admit, nothing impartial about his politics: until 2019 he was the official Downing Street spokesman for Theresa May's Tory government. He was subsequently appointed to the BBC role by Boris Johnson's government - reportedly at the behest of a close friend of his of whom there is, mysteriously, no official trace.

And then there is the opaque and unexplained business of how he came to own the *Jewish Chronicle*, the BBC's implacable critic. According to Companies House, Sir Robbie has, since

April 2020, been the sole owner and director of the *JC* - the same organ whose long campaign for a "parliamentary inquiry" into the BBC's coverage of Jews and Israel ended in "victory" in late 2022.¹

This blue-blooded guardian of 'truth' acts as the political police of the airwaves, ensuring output never fundamentally challenges capitalist hegemony or British imperialism, as witnessed in the reporting of more than two years of genocide in Gaza.

Presumably he played a role in approving the *Panorama* programme accusing Corbyn's Labour Party of anti-Semitism, which should have been investigated. According to *Jewish Voice for Liberation*, two Jewish women, Helen Marks and Rica Bird, who were falsely accused of anti-Semitism in the 2019 BBC *Panorama* documentary, 'Is Labour anti-Semitic?', finally had their letter printed in February 2023 in *The Guardian* refuting claims made in the programme - particularly an incident in which they were said to have asked a Labour investigator, Ben Westerman, "Are you from Israel?" as evidence of their 'anti-Semitism'.²

Marks and Bird provide a recording and transcript proving that no such question was ever asked³ - they had simply asked which local party branch he was from. Both women are Jewish - a fact omitted from the programme. They note that BBC producers never gave them a chance to respond and continue to stand by their false claims.

The article also highlights wider criticisms of the *Panorama* episode, including:

■ Editing emails from Jeremy Corbyn's team to suggest they defended anti-Semitism.

■ Misrepresenting testimony and cases.

■ Findings in the Forde Report and Al Jazeera's 'Labour files' that exposed bias and distortion.

JVL argues that, given these accumulated challenges, the UK broadcasting regulator, Ofcom, should reopen its investigation into the programme.

Before the sensational resignation, social media was full of posts showing a three-year-old clip from BBC's Middle East news editor, Raffi Berg, admitting his admiration from Mossad.⁴ According to the recording, "Mossad makes him proud and give him goosebumps".

According to *Canary*, internal BBC sources allege a culture of "extreme fear" among staff, when it comes to reporting critically on Israel, and that Berg has strong influence over how Israel-Palestine stories are framed. Now that would have been worth a resignation by senior BBC staff, as opposed to what we got.

We have also had the BBC cowardly spiking its own documentary, *Gaza: doctors under attack*, for fear of offending the Israeli state. This is hardly impartiality: it is complicity. Coverage of Gaza is systematically skewed, always platforming Israeli lies to provide 'balance' for a settler-colonial massacres. Even reporting on events like the New York mayoral race is bent to include a Republican 'perspective', where none is relevant, artificially 'normalising' the far right.

The rank-and-file BBC journalist is typically a liberal centrist (occasionally a Labourite). So the idea of a Marxist cell pulling BBC strings is a far-right fantasy. Some BBC journalists and editors that I have come across really do believe they are 'impartial' - citing the fact that they are attacked by both the right and the left as 'proof'. However, the reality is that like many others they are still living and thinking in terms of what liberal bourgeoisie has defined as 'human rights', the 'rule of law', etc, completely unconscious of the fact that that era is gone for ever (if it ever existed). Those I meet in the BBC World Service criticise Trump's blatant colonialist, racist, misogynist language, yet they do not seem to realise that, when a Labour prime minister in the UK or a centrist president in France obeys Trump, we are no longer talking of a rogue individual or an isolated US administration: we are talking of a global shift to the right, which is increasingly colouring and shifting real-world politics in the so-called west.

Worst of times

You could argue that the best of times for the BBC was the few months before the Iraq war of 2003. The corporation showed itself independent of the George Bush/Tony Blair agenda in terms of depicting Saddam Hussein as not just a dictator, which he was, but someone in possession of weapons of mass destruction - chemical and at times even possibly nuclear weapons.

The reporters and editors involved in investigative programmes questioning Tony Blair's lies were subsequently sacked. Probably that started a whole new period - a downward slide far away from challenging the status quo. None of the people who were expressing those opinions, writing about the lies put forward by Blair and others, were leftwing. However, what they wrote was largely correct, and now there can

be no doubt about the veracity of their broadcasts - yet they had to go.

The forced resignation of Greg Dyke and the subsequent sacking of the reporters involved started a whole new regime in the BBC, where 'impartiality' meant you could not state facts that might upset the status quo! One could argue that the most important item in any claim of impartiality must be a fact-based statement. So, when an international inspector tells you that Hussein has no chemical weapons - a fact that was subsequently proved to be correct in post-war Iraq - this is not the issuing of an opinion: it is a statement of fact. And therefore it must be accepted as such.

Gaza bias

The same is true of Gaza. When United Nations investigators report that what is happening is genocide, this becomes just another politically biased opinion. When the medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimates that over 180,000 Palestinians were killed up to February 2025, this too becomes a mere opinion.

At a seminar in the University of Oxford, I asked a relatively senior BBC editor: how come, before the Iraq war, the BBC showed relative bravery in exposing the Bush/Blair war agenda, while in reporting on Gaza we witness a complete subservience to the US/UK/Israeli line? I added that I believed the resignations and sackings of 2023 created a level of 'small c' conservatism. His reply was: Saddam Hussein did not have a lobby, but Israel has a large, powerful one. And, in some ways, that defines where they are: the size and power of a lobby influences editorial decisions; the bigger it is the more powerful it is. How can anyone claim this is 'impartiality'?

The real bias is the suffocating, institutional deference to a now defunct liberal bourgeois democracy and as a result to capital and the state.

The current scandal proves something even more sinister: that US imperial power can reach directly into the British national broadcaster and demand that heads must roll. The BBC's credentials for covering the White House were likely on the line. The British state, a pathetic subsidiary of the American empire, transmitted the order. The BBC, as always, obeyed.

Having said all that, I remain an avid consumer of many of the cultural, educational and entertainment programmes the BBC produces. There can be no doubt that the commercially driven broadcasters proposed by the likes of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* would replace such programming with superficial, profit-oriented nonsense, giving full and uncritical airtime to extreme rightwing opinion. For all the BBC's faults, we must also condemn the right's attempts to shut down the corporation. But if we want the truth we cannot rely on a 'better' BBC. No, we need our own militant, working class, full spectrum alternative media ●

Notes

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AGGREGATE

Thesis and synthesis

After a lengthy period of consideration, the November 9 CPGB membership aggregate debated and adopted theses on trans liberation. The other subject for discussion was the forthcoming Your Party founding conference in Liverpool and the danger of a witch-hunt against the organised left. **Ian Spencer** reports

For some in the confessional sects, trans rights has emerged as a defining issue - a 'red line' even. The CPGB is justly proud of its *Draft programme*, which declares:

Gay men, lesbians, transgender people, etc have often been scapegoated or persecuted. They are portrayed as threats to timeless religious values, sexual norms and the nuclear family - the basic economic unit of capitalist society.

Bigoted attitudes divide the working class and aid those advocating the authoritarian state. The working class needs to be mobilised in order to defend and advance sexual freedom.¹

This principled stance is even more important in the light of the Supreme Court decision in April 2025, which declared that, in the Equality Act 2010, the terms, 'man', 'woman' and 'sex', "were references to biological sex" (meaning "the sex of the person at birth").² This conservative position has been welcomed by some, such as the *Morning Star's* Communist Party of Britain and the John Rees-Lindsay German Counterfire outfit. Meanwhile, the Socialist Workers Party, RS21 and others defend the old liberal consensus.

Draft theses

To provide clarity, comrade Mike Macnair was commissioned by the Provisional Central Committee to write his 'Draft theses on communism and trans liberation'.³ These were published in *Weekly Worker*⁴ and discussed initially at our May 25 aggregate, before being amended and adopted on November 9.

Comrade Macnair highlighted the importance of the theses, given that trans people have been subjected to a witch-hunt in recent years, particularly since the trans question was used in the USA as a dishonest 'entering wedge' issue to divide the Democratic Party and has subsequently been used in a similar way in the UK.

Of central importance are state operations directed against trans people, as well as women, ethnic groups and the working class. Therefore, the theses are connected to our approach, which is to have a minimum programme of demands, achievable in the context of the struggle against capitalism. However, it is also part of our maximum programme, which is the achievement of a communist society, where production would be "from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs", without social classes and the need for a state.

Comrade Macnair discussed the amendments submitted on the draft theses. A series of amendments submitted by comrade Stan Keable was accepted following discussion by the PCC as being in keeping with the theses overall and offering useful clarification on various points. Comrade Keable also posed several questions regarding the theses, which comrade Macnair was happy to clarify.

A further amendment to the theses was submitted by comrade Carla Roberts, which included a resolution to add to the existing *Draft programme* a commitment to "Abolish the requirement to register gender on public and state documents. For an increase in the availability of sex-neutral facilities. Immediate and



Well, exactly

easy access to fully-funded gender clinics offering advice and medical support, up to and including gender reassignment surgery."

This amendment was discussed by the PCC and opposed, partly on the grounds that the *Draft programme* is long enough and that even big questions such as the Labour Party, the war in Iraq and Israel-Palestine are not dealt with in the *Draft programme* but in separate theses. It was also opposed on the grounds that it was imprecise regarding the availability of sex-neutral facilities and fully-funded gender clinics. So, for example, the funding of gender clinics is a demand for a properly funded NHS, to which we are already committed. Moreover, these commitments are in the 'Communism and trans liberation' theses and do not also need to be in the *Draft programme*.

In response, comrade Roberts defended her amendment. She pointed out that there are specific commitments on women and youth in the *Draft programme*, without them ever being regarded as a concession to intersectionalism. Her amendment is simply a recognition of the difficulty that trans people face, when it comes to excessive waiting times for gender-affirming procedures.

Comrade Roberts went on to argue that trans issues are important for many on the left and are playing a divisive role in debates around Your Party and

beyond. Moreover, it is an issue that is not likely to go away any time soon. This is our opportunity to show our solidarity with trans people, while not conceding on intersectionality, quotas or freedom of speech.

There followed contributions from several comrades both for and against the amendment and it was decided to vote on the amendment in parts. The three separate sentences were voted on and the first sentence - amending our *Draft programme* to include the abolition of the requirement to register one's gender on official documents - was carried. The second sentence, which would have committed the CPGB to an increase in sex-neutral facilities, was narrowly defeated and the third sentence was more fully defeated. The aggregate then voted on the theses as amended and they were carried unopposed.

Your Party

The founding of Your Party by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana presents a historic opportunity for the development of a mass party to the left of the Labour Party. However, the way this has been handled has been a debacle. It is also taking place against the background of a rapidly growing Green Party, following the election of Zack Polanski as its leader. Clearly the Green Party has radically shifted to the left ... while remaining a party of the petty bourgeoisie.

Comrade Roberts gave a comprehensive report on developments in Your Party and the chaos that has ensued because of the all too apparent split with Zarah Sultana. She has positioned herself well to the left of Corbyn.

Indeed, the small grouping of 'independent' MPs, including Corbyn, who mostly have declared their opposition to genocide in Palestine, have proved to be in many other ways to the right of the Green Party and certainly opposed to socialism - or even the use of the term, 'left'. Nonetheless, we should anticipate that the independent MPs are likely to press for an electoral alliance with the Greens.

One consequence of the shambles of the launch of Your Party is that many who previously might have joined are likely to have shifted their support to the Green Party, notwithstanding Polanski's previously well-known opposition to Corbyn and his support for the weaponising of anti-Semitism against the left in the process.⁵

Comrade Roberts drew attention to the Democratic Socialists within Your Party and pointed out that *some* of the demands put forward by Sultana are consistent with the DS. However, Sultana has also expressed support for the Zoomocracy implicit in her version of 'one member, one vote', which stands in contrast to a fully democratised party, with accountable,

recallable, elected delegates from branches.

The financial problems associated with Sultana's refusal to hand over all funds from the first iteration of Your Party launched by her, which recruited an estimated 25,000, were discussed by comrade Roberts. One implication is that a potential funding shortfall may be used as a justification for limiting the founding conference.

Clearly, the Corbyn faction, partly exemplified by Karie Murphy, is determined to keep out organised Marxists from Your Party. This opens up the prospect that Your Party will be less democratic than Labour and come into being with a witch-hunt of the left already in place at the start!

This can be further seen by the intervention of former trade union bureaucrat Mark Serwotka, who is opposed to no-platforming the gender-critical and his own so-called 'Democratic Bloc', but clearly is in favour of no-platforming the organised left. It is crucial that Your Party should be able to have organised factions that can campaign for a socialist programme within a mass working class party.

It will also be vital to oppose attempts to impose quotas on the YP executive, which might, on the face of it, be an attempt to limit the influence of cis men, but in practice will be used to marginalise communist and healthy left voices. Despite the pressure for intersectional politics in the DS, it is worth joining, said comrade Roberts, certainly for the time being - especially in the light of its opposition to imperialism and Zionism, which has blocked the involvement of the social imperialist Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

Contributions and comments on comrade Robert's report were supportive and her valuable contribution made to drafting a critique of the founding documents of YP was acknowledged.

Comrade Jack Conrad observed that the political waters are as unpredictable as ever. It is quite possible that YP will break up and effectively be stillborn, leading to widespread demoralisation. He went on to note, however, the complete absence of anything approaching democracy, notably in Reform in the UK, as well as with Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France. Nonetheless, Reform leads opinion polls in the UK and La France Insoumise dominates the left in France.

Comrade Roberts believes it cannot be taken for granted that Sultana would be defeated in a leadership contest with Corbyn, as the shine has certainly come off Saint Jeremy in recent months, thanks to the undemocratic shenanigans at the top of Your Party.

Crucially, as comrade Conrad reported, the Communist Platform will be launched in Liverpool - not merely to bear witness, but to exert an influence in favour of democracy and genuine socialism ●

Notes

1. CPGB Draft programme p36.

2. commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10259.

3. 'Communism and trans liberation': weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1536/communism-and-trans-liberation.

4. weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1540/trans-rights-and-open-polemics.

5. C Roberts 'Red-green hot air' *Weekly Worker* October 9: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1556/red-green-hot-air.

THESES

Communism and trans liberation

Intersectionalism has been firmly rejected, as has tailing feminism, of both the liberal and conservative varieties. Instead we have a clear working class position. Mike Macnair explains the reasoning

The theses below include the amendments agreed at the November 9 CPGB membership aggregate. After my original draft was published on May 1, our May 25 aggregate agreed to continue the discussion, to give more of an opportunity for comrades to propose amendments or counter-theses.

In the event, however, few amendments were proposed and no-one put forward alternative theses. The amendments have clearly improved the theses as adopted, increasing their clarity: in particular in thesis 16, by clarifying our view of working class rule as the form of the socialist transition to communism.

We have also added at the end, on comrade Carla Roberts' proposal, an amendment to the CPGB's *Draft programme* to call for abolition of the requirement to register gender on state and public documents.

In introducing the theses to the aggregate, I focussed on the basic features of *method* involved. The first is that these theses are framed by our division of the party programme into a maximum element - the end goal of communism - and a minimum

element - what could be done with the immediate overthrow of capitalist political rule and can be fought for under capitalist rule. We offer a *way forward*, not an immediate leap into the realm of freedom. But we also offer a way forward which leads in the long term to the realm of freedom.

The issue is rendered politically concrete because under capitalism a large majority is partially *dependent on* the family as an economic institution; and 'neoliberalism' and 'austerity' both increase this dependence, as well as increasing dependence on religious charities (not only in the form of poverty relief, but also religious schools). The result is that here is inevitably mass attachment to the family; and purity-politics no-platforming of people who hold illusions in familial politics simply fails to achieve its objective, and in fact *strengthens* the patriarchalist-conservative right.

Second, the theses approach the question from the standpoint of class perspective: the perspective that the working class as a class needs to unite itself, to seek power - as opposed to the capitalist class - with the goal of socialism.

This perspective is opposed to

the conservative witch-hunt against trans people, which aims to create unity between the exploiters and the exploited (and disunity among the exploited) on the basis of nation and family. It is equally opposed to the liberals' pseudo-alternatives, in which the rule-of-law constitutional state is seen as a neutral mediator between purely sectional interests (of workers, bosses, women, racial groups, regions, religious groups, and so on). This seeks to create unity between the exploiters and the exploited (and disunity among the exploited) on the basis of loyalty to the liberal constitution.

Following from this second point, the theses are also framed by the rejection of 'intersectionalism'. Intersectionalism began with the 'people's front' conception of the 7th Congress of Comintern (1935), which sought an anti-fascist alliance with liberal capitalists on the basis of the working class subordinating its particular interests; as applied to US conditions by the Communist Party of the USA, by identifying the 'trinity' of race, class, sex. This CPUSA approach set up the pro-Democrat trade union leaders as the 'official representatives' of the working class, black

nationalist leaders as the 'official representatives' of black people, and bourgeois-liberal feminists as the 'official representatives' of women. The idea mutated into something closer to its present form with the influence of western 'soft Maoism' in the youth radicalisation of the later 1960s to early 1970s.

The 'intersectionalist' approach requires, in the first place, the identification of specific sectional interests, which unite the 'section' as such: it unites Cheryl Sandberg - former chief executive of technology company Meta Platforms and author of *Lean in: women, work and the will to lead* - with the women who toil on assembly lines in the far east and south, making the hardware that software runs on; it unites Rishi Sunak with UK workers of south Asian ancestry in precarious jobs; it unites Fox News commentator Caitlin Jenner with low-class trans women dependent on even more precarious modes of survival.

This project requires, secondly, the subordination of working class interests to capitalist interests; and, thirdly, the identification of something to be the 'official leadership' of the 'movement

of the oppressed' - as opposed to the perspectives proposed by communists or socialists - to be the basis of an intersectional coalition.

The result is necessarily tailist politics.

On the one side, Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century - having in 2013 explained the Socialist Workers Party's cronyism in the 'comrade Delta' case by insufficient *feminism*, rather than as the predictable consequence of bureaucratic centralism - tail-ends the liberal line of official 'gender recognition' on the basis of self-identification and of no-platforming 'transphobes'.

On the other side, the Communist Party of Britain - and this paper's letters column's resident Stalinist, Andrew Northall, as in his letter last week (November 6) - identify *separatist* feminism as the 'official leadership' of the women's movement, and as a result tail-end the politics of feminists who have gone over to a *conservative* form of feminism and become 'useful idiots' for the cynical scheme devised by US Republican Party political operatives to use the 'gender question' as an entering wedge for Christianist patriarchalism ●

The 22 theses adopted by the November 9 aggregate

I. Witch-hunt

1. Since the later 2010s trans people have been subjected to an accelerating witch-hunt by the conservative right, its media and related political institutions. This witch-hunt is characterised by the systematic fraudulent exaggeration of the very occasional cases, where purported 'transition' is dishonestly used for personal advantage, and of equally rare cases of 'detransitioning' and 'transition regret'.

This method is exactly parallel to the same conservatives' and their media's exaggeration of the numbers of false rape claims, in order to promote rape impunity by leading jurors to be unduly suspicious of complainants' evidence.

2. This witch-hunt is, in fact, a dishonest 'entering wedge' for the *imposition by law* of the Protestant-fundamentalist and Catholic-integralist doctrine that "male and female created he them" (Genesis 1.17) and the ideas of separate spheres of male and female, and permissible sexual relations to be limited to procreation, that are built on this verse (in fact, a *male-supremacist doctrine*).

This is reflected also in the conservatives' promotion of 'tradwives' and in the Trump administration's (February 2025) support for the Tate brothers being free to travel to the US, while on bail for alleged sexual assaults. In this context, non-conservative feminists who have lent their support to the conservatives' anti-trans witch-hunt play the role merely of useful idiots for Christianist male-supremacism.

3. The witch-hunt against trans people is part of the general turn of the capitalist class away from securing the consent of the lower orders through unity with the upper classes round free trade, liberalism and anti-discrimination, and towards

securing the consent of the lower orders through unity with the upper classes around nation, patriarchal family and tradition. This turn reflects the underlying duality of capitalist politics, in which liberalism grows out of market freedom, conservatism out of the authority relations in the workplace (especially the *small* workplace).

It also reflects the fact that marginal-utility, general equilibrium economic theory is merely false in the same way as flat-earthism, with the result that marketisation and financialisation produces for the poor increased dependence on the family as an economic institution, and on religious charities. And it reflects the consequent failure of liberalism to deliver for broad masses, and hence liberalism's currently declining ability to produce consent. In this aspect it is similar to the 1970s turn to liberalism and anti-discrimination, away from 1950s-60s 'New Deal', social-democrat and Christian-democrat forms of 'managed society', which reflected the declining ability to produce consent of that 1950s-60s regime.

4. In the very short term, the dominant tendency among trans rights activists made themselves specifically vulnerable to this sort of attack by committing themselves to 'intersectional' unity with capitalist liberals, and thereby identifying themselves both with 'human resource departments' managerialism, and with free-market financial globalism.

The form of this identification has most visibly two elements: the demand for official recognition as a member of the destination sex/gender, within the implied framework of accepting gender as a strict binary; and no-platforming 'transphobes'. Behind both lay the anti-materialist theoretical commitment to the social (meaning ideological)

construction of gender. This *inherently* implied that both official recognition and the no-platforming of 'transphobes' were central tasks for the liberation of trans people; and conversely ones on which there could be a single-issue united front with the liberals and HR managers.

This theoretical commitment also directly counterposed the claims of trans rights activists who pursued this policy to the lived experience of the majority of women, in which the oppression of women is an *embodied* experience, inescapably linked to the ways in which the class order exploits human biology.

5. Communists have to fight this witch-hunt. The primary means of doing so has to be the exposure of the fraudulent character of the witch-hunters' claims. Second, and alongside this, it is necessary to put forward proposals for the liberation of trans people which do not depend on the Eurocommunist delusion that this can be delivered by unity with the liberals on the basis of anti-materialist arguments, for state controls of speech, etc.

II. Oppression

6. The oppression of trans people is commonly treated as an aspect of the more general oppression of 'LGBT+' or 'queer' people. The present witch-hunt makes it impossible to approach LGBT+ as a single, oppressed 'community'. This is, on the one hand, because the witch-hunt *specifically* targets trans people (and has been supported by some lesbian-separatist feminists). On the other hand, LGBT+ people do not form a class on which their oppressors are dependent (unlike workers or peasants). The problem of constructing solidarity to defeat the witch-hunt is therefore a problem of constructing solidarity *of the working class as such*, not of constructing solidarity either of trans or of LGBT+ people as a

distinct group.

Apart from the current witch-hunt, the oppression of trans people under capitalist rule involves (a) (i) elements which are specific to trans people, and (ii) elements which are common to oppressed groups more generally and in some cases to the 'undeserving poor' more generally; and (b) (i) elements which are derived from the specific operations of the current state order and its political-ideological representatives, and (ii) elements which grow out of capitalism as a class order and as a market order. These differences bear on the appropriate communist policy for the liberation of trans people from this oppression.

7. The core element of the oppression of trans people is the phenomenon displayed as politics in the witch-hunt: the insistence that everyone must be either male or female, and be publicly identified as such.

This has immediate forms in relation to official documents; but also in the physical built environment, in male-only and female-only public spaces, which are largely an invention of capitalism. One particular instance - the provision of men's and women's public toilets - originates as an effort of 19th century conservatives to keep women in the home and continues to discriminate against women by differential provision.

The liberals offered to evade this issue in relation to trans people *as a specific group* (as distinct from both intersex people and butch lesbians, femme gay men, non-binary people, etc) by offering legal sex change within the framework of the compulsory binary. This project has failed by way of the conservative witch-hunt - but, more fundamentally, because of the *underlying ground of the political purchase* of the conservative witch-hunt.

That is, that the *approximate*

sex binary has biological grounds in human reproductive biology; its transformation into a fetish (competitive heterosexuality) is given by the market order of relationship formation in capitalism; and capitalism also throws up the radical intensification of the policing operations of the bureaucratic-coercive state. The result is that the narrow version of gender recognition offered by the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and similar legislation is oppressive to trans people by requiring a period of being neither one nor the other (while both the state and social expectations growing out of competitive heterosexuality *require* being one or the other); while self-identification versions (as in Theresa May's proposals and their defeated Scottish version), because they imply both over-claims and extensive policing of speech, *appear as a threat* to the very large majority who remain cis and heterosexual.

8. Immediately linked to this is the difficulty in obtaining gender-affirming care in health systems. This has two aspects. On the one hand, it reflects ideological gatekeeping by doctors and health administrators animated by religious and other forms of conservative politics. This is specific to trans people, but shared in different ways in various aspects of women's healthcare, and in racism in healthcare.

The second aspect is the *general* problem of access to healthcare, which reflects the inherent features of market- and insurance-based systems and the general squeeze on public expenditure as affecting public-funding-based systems. Long waits for diagnosis and treatment are common to trans people - and to pretty much everyone in need of treatment except the seriously rich.

9. Gender nonconformity (whether in the form of trans

AGGREGATE

or other forms) is met with discrimination in employment, housing and other services. This is *theoretically* subject to policing by the Equality Act in the UK (different rules apply elsewhere), but actual practical enforcement of anti-discrimination rules is variable, and more available to the small minority who can afford effective legal representation. The phenomenon is, obviously enough, not limited to trans people, but affects also lesbians and gay men, women and ethnic minorities.

In addition, there is a more general issue of the 'rationing' of jobs and housing, driven by market dynamics. The 'housing crisis' - meaning *chronic* problems of under-supply of housing, driven by landlord and property-speculator interests - is a permanent feature of capitalism (only temporarily alleviated by public housing supply in the 20th century). The tendency of capitalism to produce standing unemployment and precarity of employment was similarly mitigated in the 'front-line states' in the cold war period, but has returned with a vengeance.

10. Trans people are subject to direct violence in the form of queer-bashing, up to and including being killed (a prominent recent example is the 2023 killing of Brianna Ghey²). The phenomenon is at root driven by the performance of competitive heterosexuality; it affects gay men and lesbians as well as trans people. It is arguable that the same dynamics affect the much more widespread phenomenon of male violence against women, and also non-state racist violence.

In this context, lawyers have constructed a *specific* form of oppression which is the 'trans panic defence' or 'LGBT panic defence' (once called the 'gay panic defence').

11. Trans people are subjected to discriminatory policing. This reflects the general dynamic, in which 'professional' police forces are dominated by conservatives (a feature of Soviet Russia from the early stages of the rise of Stalinism onwards, as well as of capitalist countries generally). The result is that not only trans people, but also women (as in the 2021 killing of Sarah Everard³), ethnic minorities and the working class more generally, are subject to discriminatory policing.

In this context, a specific form of oppression is that trans men are far more likely to be prosecuted for obtaining sexual relations by fraud (by 'pretending to be men') than anyone else is for this offence.

III. Communism

12. The aim of communism is a society without classes, state or dependence on the family as an economic institution. It is a society whose distributional principle is "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need", and whose aim is maximising human possibilities - "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" - not to maximise profit or output.

13. Such a society will probably have the resources to enable a 'full' biological transition - one which produces self-generated hormones and fertility in the destination gender. Certainly, it will have no need to repress lesser forms of body modification (note, the *present* size of the global cosmetic surgery and



Liberation relies on working class leadership and communism

procedures industry is valued at \$69.4 billion).

14. More fundamentally, such a society will have no need to insist that everyone must be either male or female, and be publicly identified as such.

15. We can no more predict the modes of formation of sexual relationships in fully developed communism than 15th century people could predict the fully developed competitive sexual marketplace of the later 19th to 21st centuries. (This is not to say

that the transition will take 500 years: merely that the *stage of the transition out of capitalism* that we are at is analogous to the stage of the transition out of feudalism that was the European dominance of monarchism after the failure of the Italian city republics and before the Netherlands and Britain showed a better capitalist alternative.) But we can be confident that the competitive sexual marketplace - which is clearly a product of capitalism as such - will wither away, as market

relations wither away. With this withering away, so will the dynamics which produce queer-bashing, and so on.

IV. Immediate

16. Our immediate programme is to replace capitalist class political rule with *working class political rule*. During the socialist transition to communism, society will remain class-divided and still in a contradictory way partially market-based. It will be quite possible to take important steps

towards the liberation of trans people at the first stages of such a regime; and it is also necessary to fight for them as immediate demands *before* the overthrow of capitalist political rule.

17. We fight for the immediate abolition of the requirement to state sex on public documents.

18. We fight for an increase in the availability of sex-neutral facilities, moving towards the replacement of single-sex facilities on the basis of an increased total number. This applies, for example, both to toilets (which should be WCs with wash basin in the same room, directly accessible from public spaces) and changing rooms (which should be provided as individual rooms accessible from public spaces, not semi-public changing spaces).

In relation to the issue of single-sex prisons, we stand for the radical reduction of the use of imprisonment as a penalty: prison should be a last resort. The prison regime needs to be radically transformed (*Draft programme*, § 3.17).

19. We fight for the defence, restoration and radical improvement of public healthcare, including gender-affirming care; including public ownership of the pharmaceutical industry, and cancellation of the odious debts incurred by public-health services as a result of the financialisation frauds since the 1970s. (More in *Draft programme*, § 3.9, 'Health'.)

We stand for the separation of church and state, and the confiscation of Church of England property (*Draft programme*, § 3.18, 'Religion'). The pursuit of Christianist and other conservative policing agendas by doctors and medical administrators (whether in relation to women's reproductive health issues, or in relation to gender issues) should be treated as gross misconduct.

20. We fight against discrimination against trans people - as against all forms of discrimination - in employment, housing and other services. We stand for radical reductions in working hours (*Draft programme*, § 3.4, 'Working conditions and wage workers') and the right to work for all (*Draft programme*, § 3.6, 'The unemployed'); and for a massive revival of social housing in order to end the housing shortage (*Draft programme*, § 3.8, 'Housing'); getting rid of shortages reduces the scope of discrimination.

21. We fight for clear legislation to abolish the 'LGBT panic defence'.

22. We stand for the abolition of the professional police force, along with the standing army, and its replacement with a conscript people's militia (*Draft programme*, § 3.12, 'Militia'). While this measure will not *abolish* biased policing, it will *create the conditions* in which it can be effectively combatted, by striking against the aspect of biased policing that arises out of the social dynamics of the professional police force as such.

We therefore resolve to amend our *Draft programme* § 3.16 to add as a new, third bullet point: "Abolish the requirement to register gender on public and state documents." ●

Notes

1. 'Communism and trans liberation':

weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1536/communism-and-trans-liberation.

2. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Brianna_Ghey.

3. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Sarah_Everard.

YOUR PARTY

Avoid the quota trap

Conference will be a pseudo-democratic stitch-up. A rally with star speakers, lots of clapping and the occasional Zoom vote. **Carla Roberts** reports on those who, no matter what their differences, want to do things differently



White, male and not a token in sight: members of the League of Struggle in 1897. Standing (left to right): Alexander Malchenko, P Zaporozhets, Anatoly Vaneyev; Sitting (left to right): Vasily Starkov, Gleb Krzhizhanovsky, Vladimir Lenin and Julius Martov

On November 8 the Democratic Unity initiative in Your Party met for a second time online to discuss tweaks to the Sheffield Demands (most of which were uncontroversial). Hopefully, the next meeting will be able to ratify them as key joint amendments to the YP founding documents (increasing their chances of getting a hearing and being adopted).

They will, we hope, also form the basis for a joint fringe event at the November 29-30 launch conference in Liverpool itself. We are currently discussing a half-day event on Saturday November 29, where members and groups can properly discuss the various issues affecting Your Party - in stark contrast to the launch conference itself, where *no real debate* is going to take place (if your organisation or YP branch wants to get involved, email democraticunityyp@gmail.com).

Counterfire failed to come along on November 8, but there were two new representatives of the Revolutionary Communist Group, who are hoping that Zarah Sultana will split Your Party to set up their version

of a “vanguard party” (which seems unlikely). There were also members from Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century, the CPGB, the Democratic Socialists, Ken Loach’s Platform for a Democratic Party, the Democratic and Socialist Network, the Greater Manchester Left Caucus, Socialist Alternative, the Bolshevik Tendency, the Social Justice Party, the Campaign for Mass Workers Party, *Prometheus*, Republican Labour Education Forum, the Trans Liberation Group and members from a number of local Your Party branches. Andrew Hedges from the Democratic Bloc could only attend briefly and did not speak on the demands.

The Socialist Party in England and Wales, the Socialist Workers Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party have also been invited, but have as yet not come along. Interestingly though, the SWP *did* attend a public meeting with Zarah Sultana, organised by the Democratic Socialists on November 9. Charlie Kimber stated that they want to get involved, which is excellent. (As an aside, we would take serious

issue with how that meeting was run - attendees were reduced to speaking for a measly 60 seconds, were only allowed to ask ‘questions’ and were often rudely cut off mid-sentence by the chair - while Sultana and three DS speakers on the ‘top table’ were given ample time to present their views. It looked very top-heavy and unnecessarily bureaucratic. If we are serious about fighting for unity, we have to make sure we treat other *organisations* seriously - and that includes in Zoom meetings.)

We suspect the SWP’s mind has been focused somewhat by a rather blunt statement by Corbyn’s right-hand woman, Karie Murphy, in a recent meeting organised by the Your Party Connections Network: she said that, “personally”, she does not want the SWP to be able to join Your Party - which *Socialist Worker* immediately picked up and objected to, and understandably so.¹ Funnily enough, despite being reminded by the chair of the meeting of the excellent open culture (“If you don’t want to be quoted, don’t say it”), Murphy went on and on about

not wanting to have whatever she said “leaked to the press”. That is rather amusing - there have been numerous briefings to the media against Sultana in particular. The full transcript of the meeting has been shared far and wide, and unsurprisingly so.² After all, members have been kept in the dark about the entire founding process of Your Party, so comrades are lapping up every bit of information that they can get hold of.

Having said that, Murphy did not actually reveal very much, pleading ignorance on most things. Though we did pick up on this little gem: a few weeks ago, Artin Giles, her co-employee at Corbyn’s Peace and Justice Project, told a facilitators’ training session that all amendments coming from the regional assemblies would be read through and processed by “a group of volunteers in London”. When asked about that, Murphy quickly denied it - no, no, no, that would be unfair, because it would open HQ up to accusations of bias.

Instead, she explained, it is an “algorithm” developed by

Yanis Varoufakis’s Democracy in Europe Movement 2025, which will go through them all: “Where we have 90% of agreement around whatever amendment on whatever paper, that will then go through kind of immediately.” Issues, however, that are “more contentious - repeatedly contentious up and down the country, and not just in one area, but repeated - then clearly, that leans towards an amendment that has to have further debate at conference”. She explicitly mentioned the proposed ban of parties in this context.

Clearly, somebody somewhere has to make a decision on what counts as “repeatedly contentious”, and, crucially, what alternative formulations (if any) will make it into the documents at conference. We could well imagine that HQ will go for a formulation that allows members of entirely ineffective organisations like Transform to join (Murphy even welcomed them by name) - but would still keep out members of the SWP and other organised left groups. Perhaps by establishing some sort of list of ‘approved

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organisations', as advocated by the awful Democratic Bloc of former Labour NEC member and Momentum vice-chair Mish Rahman. Quite a few of his 'team' used to be members of the secret YP Organising Group - and it is rather telling that they only discovered their love for "democracy" after Murphy closed the OG and they lost their privileged positions.

The Democratic Bloc proposes that members may only hold dual membership of an "approved democratic party" and that the leadership "should agree a list of political parties which are deemed acceptable". The groups have to "open and share their books, so that we can understand the size of their membership, their finances, their GDPR compliance and their disciplinary procedures." This kind of bureaucratic control freakery should be roundly rejected.

Mark Serwotka, former general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union, seems to have joined up with the Democratic Bloc too. He has been speaking at their meetings and, in a rather nasty article in the *Morning Star*, calls out against no-platforming - but he only means for those "campaigning for their sex-based rights, away from the existing left". Those, however, who are not "away from the existing left" (ie, groups like the SWP, SPEW, CPGB, etc) should be driven out or at least marginalised in Your Party: "The priorities of small sectarian groups, who themselves bear much responsibility for the alienation of the wider working class from the left, and whose size and records speak for themselves, cannot be allowed to dominate Your Party. If so, we will fail."

As if the organised left is the problem of what's wrong with Your Party! In his time as leader of the PCS, Serwotka very much relied on "small sectarian groups" like SPEW, the SWP and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty to back him. This goes to show that union bureaucrats suffer from amnesia when it suits. Serwotka and former MP Beth Winter

(also a speaker at events by the Democratic Bloc) have been tasked with setting up YP in Wales - and are doing their utmost to do it as undemocratically and top-down as in the rest of the country.

Needless to say, members of the organised left have joined Your Party - but they will be forced to operate in a clandestine manner. Not a good thing. We want a party of the whole left, where members can organise *openly* in platforms and tendencies, temporarily or permanently, without needing permission from the likes of Murphy, Rahman, Serwotka and co.

Differences

This issue of political platforms was also discussed during the Democratic Unity meeting last Saturday. A comrade from the Chesterfield YP branch had proposed to delete "permanent or temporary" from point 1 of the Sheffield Demands. But a majority of reps agreed that it is necessary to spell this point out, particularly as some organisations ban factions or allow them only for a couple of months.

The meeting also discussed the previous proposal by Michael Lavalette of Counterfire to delete the demand that "MPs and all public officeholders should receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker, with the rest being donated to the party." He argued that it would be off-putting to MPs who might want to defect to Your Party. The small working group appointed the week before recommended opposing this proposed tweak, on the basis that we do not want the kind of representative who sees being an MP as a career. In fact, nobody supported the proposal to delete this long-standing principle of the workers' movement (implemented by the 1871 Paris Commune).

The meeting also agreed on an extended preamble, which is not without its problems. While it is positive that it clarifies that our initiative is based on "anti-imperialism" and "anti-Zionism", it has more than a whiff of intersectionality about it ("recognising the overlapping

and interrelated struggles"). The preamble is just about acceptable, because it contains the important clarification that we fight for a "culture of open debate and free speech", rather than the no-platforming of dissenting views that is often associated with intersectional groups.

More seriously though, there is a proposal by the Trans Liberation Group and the Democratic Socialists in Your Party to add this further amendment:

The CEC should seek to maximise the political involvement of oppressed peoples. To achieve this, it is temporarily necessary to implement a quota system to the CEC operating under the STV + Best Loser method, with restrictions on the number of cis men (no more than half the CEC) and a minimum of 25% of seats filled from members of racial or ethnic minority backgrounds.

That is a deeply problematic proposal, in our view. All other issues discussed are relatively minor, but this is a matter of principle.

Of course, we recognise that women, ethnic minorities and other oppressed groups are too often absent from the organised left, including leadership positions. This reflects their 'double oppression' in wider society and the fact that their oppression is not only as part of the working class. But we do not believe that this issue can be solved by technical means, which in reality hands more power to an incumbent bureaucracy (which is able to promote the 'right' sort of individuals).

Quotas rest on the mistaken idea that black people will fight against the oppression of black people. Women will fight for women's rights. Etc, etc. But this is simply not the case. Just look at a politician like home secretary Shabana Mahmood. Her ethnic background does not stop her scapegoating illegal migrants. Or just look at the 'Blair babes' - unprincipled careerists all, shooed in via women-only short lists. In other words, the fact that you are a woman does not necessarily make you the best fighter for women's rights.

More importantly, we know that the fight against the oppression of women, trans people, gays, the disabled, the elderly, the young, etc *cannot be won* within capitalism. And we can only hope to overthrow capitalism if we have a strong, united working class. What that posits is *correct politics* and an *ongoing struggle* against opportunism embodied in a trusted and proven leadership. That cannot be arrived at through quotas and electing people on the basis of this or that non-political criteria. Politics should be front, back and centre. Quite conceivably, middle class or even bourgeois comrades whose social origins lie in the intelligentsia, but who have come to identify with the cause of the working class, may be far better working class leaders than those from the working class itself. Who was the better working class leader, Vladimir Illich Lenin or Ramsay MacDonald? Clearly the former, not the latter.

We should view such comrades as assets, not as a problem. Such people are rare. Not two a penny. Note, the Bolshevik leadership in 1917 counted just two workers in terms of social origins (Alexander Shlyapnikov and Mykola Skrypnyk). Others had fathers who were members of the nobility, big landlords, shop keepers, lawyers,

priests and merchants. Would the politics of the Bolshevik leadership be improved by imposing a quota system? After all, not only were women 'underrepresented', so were Great Russians - an undoubted problem that would be progressively overcome with the consolidation of working class power, socialist revolution, beginning in Europe, and steady progress towards communism.

Crucially, we need to win the working class, not least 'white cis men', to fight for human liberation. Without that, trans people, women and black people - none of us, including said 'white cis men', have any hope of ever being free.

We recognise that the Trans Liberation Group and Democratic Socialists *in theory* agree with a class perspective. They also argue for quotas to be only a "temporary" measure. But just as with sortition-plus, quotas will be used against the fight for *correct politics*. Quotas entirely suit the interests of reformists, career politicians, opportunists and separatists.

It certainly looks as if the comrades have clearly internalised the bureaucratic practices of trade unions, student unions and the Labour Party. What the Democratic Socialists and TLG are proposing is certainly in line with the 'Organised Sections' in the *federal* Labour Party. Each *approved* section enjoys an automatic seat on the national executive committee (which the Sheffield Demands, DSYF and TLG quite rightly reject). Counting votes for candidates differently, depending on accidental physical or sexual characteristics, really is not that far off. Quotas *divide* us along lines of race, gender, sexual orientation.

Quotas also lead us down the rabbit hole of the hierarchy of oppression. Should not disabled people be given their quota? And what is *really* a disability? What about those caring for those disabled people? What about single mothers? And what about people who suffer not just one

set of oppressions, but a number of them (the black, gay, disabled, single mum) - should votes for them not be weighted four times as much as those cast for a white cis man? The list is endless.

No, politics should always decide. And politics really is the only solution, when it comes to liberating women, trans people, ethnic minorities, etc. We need a strong and clear minimum programme that fights against the oppression of women, trans people, ethnic minorities, etc. And we also have to explain that, unless we fight for the maximum programme (communism), this discrimination can only be ameliorated, but never overcome. Needless to say, oppressed sections, just like political shades and tendencies, should be free to organise in caucuses to cohere their demands and, if they wish, agree on a particular set of candidates that they mobilise for, increasing their chances of being voted onto the leadership.

And, of course, there are *some* technical things that can be part of the way forward. We need to make our meetings and conferences more accessible to people who are usually left out: we need creches, hearing loops, fully accessible venues, etc.

Clearly, the CPGB is not the only organisation in the unity initiative that rejects quotas as the entirely wrong way forward. We could not in all good conscience fight for a set of key amendments that, in effect, would establish more bureaucracy and lead to less unity in our already badly divided class. Hopefully, Democratic Unity will not fall into the quota trap - that would be more than regrettable ●

Notes

1. socialistworker.co.uk/news/exclusive-what-your-party-insiders-are-saying.
2. docs.google.com/document/d/1rxLzlbj2FV8FpC36wiFeRp6M1j1qvYEm1yDMa_tuuBc/edit?tab=t.0.
3. morningstaronline.co.uk/article/stakes-are-too-high-allow-your-party-fail-through-bad-faith-politics.

Fighting fund

Genuine debate

As usual, week two in every month is nowhere near the best, when it comes to the *Weekly Worker* fighting fund. This time we received just £333 towards our £2,750 target for November, taking our running total up to £780. That, of course, means we still need to raise just short of £2,000 in the last 17 days of the month!

But, as I always say, I'm still optimistic. I know that the real build-up almost always comes nearer the end of the month - so expect a totally different story next week!

This week, in fact, we had 18 donors, making things a lot better than they would have been if the number had been nearer the usual size. Thank you, comrades PM (£50), ST (£20), AB (£11), MH (£10), TO (£8), JV (£7) and GP, NL, SO and AR (£5 each). All those made their contributions via PayPal. Then we had the comrades who donated by standing order or bank transfer: PB (£80), DV and NH (£30 each), NB (£25), IS (£12), and SM, PM and CC (£10).

So, not unusually, we're well

below the going rate, but expect things to pick up very soon! In the words of HJ, who's just set up a new subscription, "I've never known a left paper so committed to genuine debate, which is what we really need, isn't it?"

You've got it, comrade! Conducting such debate is the only way we can find the answers our movement needs so badly. The question is: 'How can we build a mass working class movement that will really take us forward?'

So don't look elsewhere - join us in the fight for such a movement, headed by a principled Marxist party, by ensuring that the *Weekly Worker* can continue playing its key role. Please help us out - go to the web address below if you need more information on how you can do that ●

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

Online Communist Forum



Sunday November 16 5pm Sir Keir in danger? Political report from the CPGB's Provisional Central Committee and discussion

Use this link to register:
communistparty.co.uk/ocf

Organised by CPGB: communistparty.co.uk and Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk
For further information, email Stan Keable at Secretary@labourpartymarxists.org.uk

A selection of previous Online Communist Forum talks can be viewed at: youtube.com/c/CommunistPartyofGreatBritain

DEMANDS

Our joint key amendments

This is the current version of the Sheffield Demands that were first developed by the steering committee of the Sheffield branch of Your Party. They have since been adopted and developed by a number of organisations and branches

We hope that Your Party will become a truly democratic, socialist and member-led mass party of the working class. This requires a culture of open debate, free speech and the right of members to get together in platforms and tendencies.

In order to stand up to global capitalism, it needs to be thoroughly internationalist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist - which means it should be explicitly and uncompromisingly anti-Zionist. It must also stand in solidarity and actively fight for the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women, trans people and all other oppressed groups of people, recognising the overlapping and interrelated struggles these groups face. Your Party must actively empower marginalised voices to fight for their own liberation - a fight that is embedded in class struggle.

In this spirit, we campaign for the following changes to the draft constitution, standing orders and document on organisational strategy.

1. For a party of the whole left
All left groups, large and small, should be positively welcomed into the party.

■ **Delete:** “Members may not hold membership in any other national political party, except if specified by the CEC.”

■ **Delete:** “Members may not affiliate with or participate in organisations undermining party values.”

■ **Add:** Members should have full rights to organise openly into tendencies or platforms, permanent or temporary, and advocate publicly for political positions, even if they differ from the current majority.

2. For accountability, free speech and openness
Democracy requires transparency. Members cannot exercise control if decisions are hidden behind confidentiality rules.

■ **Delete:** “Members must accordingly respect the confidentiality of internal party matters.”

■ **Add:** “Detailed minutes of all CEC and officers’ group meetings should be published within seven days, for members to review.”

3. Power to the members and the branches
We cannot wait until after the leadership elections in March 2026 before YP branches are officially set up. There are dozens of vibrant proto-branches that have been meeting for many months.

■ **Delete:** “The CEC must ‘oversee’ the establishment of branches.”

■ **Add:** “Branches should be established immediately by inviting all local members to a foundation meeting. If there are rival groups or other problems, HQ may facilitate such a meeting, if requested by at least one of the branches.”

■ **Delete:** “Members must be UK residents or have the right to vote in UK elections.”

■ **Add:** “Membership is open to anyone who lives in Britain or has the right to vote in UK elections. We should not exclude migrants and refugees who do not hold residents’ rights.”

■ **Add:** “Branches should receive at least 50% of local members’ fees.”

■ **Add:** “Branches should be formed along real community lines, not just electoral boundaries - the decision should rest with the branches themselves.”

■ **Add:** “Local branches should decide how they organise, if they want to set up local assemblies - and how those should be run.”

■ **Add:** “There should be a proper first conference in 2026, with democratically elected delegates from properly constituted branches.”

■ **Add:** “The sovereignty of the party resides with the membership, whose collective democratic participation in branches and at conferences determines the party’s policy and programme. Guaranteeing members an equal right to participate in the democratic process requires that this right be reserved exclusively for individual members. While organisations and trade unions are welcome to affiliate by accepting the party’s programme and are invited to organise as caucuses, they shall not have special voting rights or any other special privileges as organisations.”

■ **Add:** “All officers should be elected, accountable and subject to recall.”

4. For a collective leadership
We should avoid a replica of Labour’s unaccountable structures.

■ The party’s leadership model should be democratically determined by its founding conference. Thereafter the entire leadership body should be elected at annual conference, by branch delegates, through single transferable vote under the Droop quota (more commonly known as Scottish STV).

■ There should be no unelected officers’ group running the party, no automatic seats on the leadership body. All officers should be elected from within the CEC, so they can be held accountable.

■ All CEC members should be recallable - at conference and by branch petition.

5. For a fair and independent disciplinary process
There is no mention of a disciplinary process in the four documents. We need clear rules focusing on an independent process, with natural justice, clear timelines and easy appeals procedures.

6. Holding our representatives to account
The current proposal that it would require 40% of all local members to sign a recall petition is impossible to meet.

■ **Add:** “Branches should be able to decide by simple majority vote to start recall proceedings.”

■ **Add:** “MPs and all public officeholders should receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker, with the rest being donated to the party.”

Amendment guide
To make sure your changes actually go through, we recommend that you press the ‘thumb down’ in the relevant section, write down the proposed changes in the little window, as well as in the relevant section in the text (ie, twice).

Draft constitution

3a) Conference
Add: “There should be a proper first conference in 2026, with democratically elected delegates from properly constituted branches.”

3b) Central Executive Committee and 3c) Leadership
Delete both sections.

Replace with:
“The party’s leadership model should be democratically determined by its founding conference. Thereafter the entire leadership body should be elected at annual conference, by branch delegates, through single transferable vote under the Droop quota (more commonly known as

Scottish STV).
“There should be no unelected officers’ group running the party, no automatic seats on the leadership body. All officers should be elected from within the CEC, so they can be held accountable.
“All CEC members should be recallable - at conference and by branch petition.
“Detailed minutes of all CEC and officers’ group meetings should be published within seven days, for members to review.”

Motivation: We should avoid a replica of Labour’s unaccountable structures.

3d) Branches
Paragraph 1
Add at the end: “Branches should be formed along real community lines, not just electoral boundaries - the decision should rest with the branches themselves.”

Paragraph 2
Delete: “in a process overseen by the CEC or its appointed representative”.
Add: “Branches should be established immediately by inviting all local members to a foundation meeting. If there are rival groups or other problems, HQ may facilitate such a meeting, if requested by at least one of the branches. All officers should be elected, accountable and subject to recall.”

Motivation: We cannot wait until after the leadership elections in March 2026 before YP branches are officially set up. There are dozens of vibrant proto-branches that have been meeting for many months.

Paragraph 8
Delete: “and shall be appropriately resourced to do so”.
Add: “Branches should receive at least 50% of local members’ fees.”

Paragraph 9
Delete: “All branches shall undertake the necessary work to run regular public-facing, local community assemblies. These assemblies shall be democratic and contribute to community activity and party policy development.”

Replace with: “Local branches should decide how they organise, if they want to set up local assemblies - and how those should be run.”

4) Membership
Add new first paragraph: “The sovereignty of the party resides with the membership, whose collective democratic participation in branches and at conferences determines the party’s policy and programme. Guaranteeing members an equal right to participate in the democratic process requires that this right be reserved exclusively for individual members.”

Paragraph 2
Delete: “Members must accordingly respect the confidentiality of internal party matters.”

Motivation: Democracy requires transparency. Members cannot exercise control if decisions are hidden behind confidentiality rules.

Paragraph 11
Delete: “Members may not hold membership in any other national political party, except if specified by the CEC.”

Replace with: “Members should have full rights to organise openly into tendencies or platforms, permanent or temporary, and advocate publicly for political positions, even if they differ from the current majority.”

Paragraph 12
Delete: “Members may not affiliate with or participate in organisations undermining party values.”

Motivation: “All left groups, large and small, should be positively welcomed into the party.”

Paragraph 13
Delete: “Members must be UK residents or have the right to vote in UK elections.”

Replace with: “Membership is open to anyone who lives in Britain or has the right to vote in UK elections.”

Motivation: We do not exclude migrants and refugees who do not hold residents’ rights.

Add new paragraph at the end:
“We will establish a disciplinary process with clear rules focusing on an independent process, with natural justice, clear timelines and easy appeals procedures.”

Motivation: There is no mention of a disciplinary process in the four documents.

5) Affiliates
Add: “While organisations and trade unions are welcome to affiliate by accepting the party’s programme and are invited to organise as caucuses, they shall not have special voting rights or any other special privileges as organisations.”

Standing orders

3. Conduct of Party elections
There are three occurrences of ‘Recall votes’ and we recommend the same process for all three:

3. a. v) Recall Votes for Local Officers

3. b. v) Recall Votes for National Officers

3. c. iv) Recall Votes for public office holders

Delete: “If 40% of members in good standing within the local party sign a dedicated recall petition for an officer, then this will trigger a vote on that party officer’s (office holder’s) continuation in the role. Active recall petitions will be available on the party website for a period of 28 days.”

Replace with: “All officers and public office holders should be elected, accountable and subject to recall. Branches should be able to decide by simple majority vote to start recall proceedings.”

Motivation: It is almost impossible to get 40% of all local members to sign a recall petition. We need real accountability.

Add new point 3. c. vi)
“MPs and all public officeholders should receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker, with the rest being donated to the party.”

Organisational strategy

5. The Inaugural CEC
Delete point 5. iv: “There shall be additional reserved seats for organised sections (no more than five) and devolved nation representatives (one for each of Scotland and Wales), when these structures have been properly established.” ●

Email democraticunityyp@gmail.com if your organisation or branch wants to support the Sheffield Demands initiative

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What we fight for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

weekly Worker

AKP fights tooth and nail

2,400 years jail threat

Erdoğan's governing coalition is deeply split and many predict defeat or a new coalition. Meanwhile, Ekrem İmamoğlu, his closest rival, faces a lifetime in prison. **Esen Uslu** looks at the shifting political alignments

Old Turkish sagas, which tell the stories of long-gone dynasties and states which had vanished after flourishing briefly, generally start with the phrase, 'Many signs have appeared', to indicate their impending demise.

Nowadays, the almost quarter-century-long rule of president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seems to be approaching quite quickly to such an inflection point, with many signs having appeared. It seems to me that the end of Erdoğan and the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) is near.

Of course, this does not mean that they will leave the political scene. On the contrary, they are fighting tooth and nail to maintain their hold on power. Only this month Istanbul's jailed mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, has been charged with 142 offences. If found guilty the Republican People's Party (CHP) politician - and leading presidential hopeful - faces a prison sentence that adds up 2,430 years. The charges run into nearly 4,000 pages and range from running a criminal organisation, bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, extortion and tender rigging.

Erdoğan's coalition that has kept him in power - albeit torn, tattered and roughly stitched together - seems to be nearing the end of its usefulness. Forming a new coalition is the order of the day.

The main split is between the AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which has supported Erdoğan through thick and thin, and has been amply rewarded for its loyalty. In recent months the speeches of leading MHP members have contained ambiguous and convoluted phrases, not unnoticed by seasoned observers.

Tensions reached a new level when the MHP declined to attend the October 29 Republican Day celebrations held at Erdoğan's court, despite being invited. Neither MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli nor any other party member attended - this had never previously happened in the past decade. Nor did they participate in any other activities during the day of festivities. In recent years, to demonstrate the strength of the AKP-MHP relationship to friends and enemies alike, they used to exchange special gifts. This year MHP had an art piece prepared, containing a composition of the Turkish flag and presidential seal, but Bahçeli did not present it to Erdoğan.

Cyprus

As the drift became more apparent, speculation about the reason behind it became rife in the press. One of their recent disagreements concerned how and why the October 19 Northern Cyprus presidential elections were lost, after the all-out effort to ensure the incumbent won. Despite all that, Turkey's candidate received only 36% of the vote, while the opposition candidate received 63%.

The election outcome surprised



CHP rally: İmamoğlu speaking

everyone, and Bahçeli responded by calling for Northern Cyprus to be annexed to the Turkish state forthwith, while Erdoğan coolly congratulated the elected president. Erdoğan had previously worked with the victorious candidates in 2005-10 and 2015-20 and is quite familiar with the limited impact of their presidency on major political issues. He even presided over the 2004 referendum on the Kofi Annan plan for a united Cyprus, which the Turkish side accepted and the Greek side refused.

Therefore, Erdoğan may attempt to use this position to improve Turkey's relations with European powers.

Istanbul

However, this does not hide the fact that the AKP failed to win the 2023 general election outright. A body blow for Erdoğan's prestige. This failure followed three successive election losses to İmamoğlu and the CHP in Istanbul. His arrest being met with CHP outrage and mass demonstrations across Turkey. Many went beyond CHP control and took on a life of their own (but, like the Gazi Park protests in 2013, they were uncoordinated and soon fizzled out). Amongst the charges İmamoğlu faces include faking his university degree, which could lead to him being barred from running for president. Indeed there appear to be moves afoot to ban the CHP - denied by the Istanbul prosecutor's office.

Note, CHP was once Turkey's 'natural party of government'. Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk,

the father of modern Turkey, in September 1919, it is the country's oldest political party. Today it is an associate member of the Party of European Socialists and a member of the Socialist International. That means being pro-EU and pro-Nato ... in other words it is *for the moment* out of tune with Donald Trump's new world order.

Meanwhile, it is, though, perfectly understandable why Erdoğan is trying to maintain the current coalition until conditions are right for a new one, in order to secure yet another electoral victory. Erdoğan is attempting to pull together smaller parties that have emerged from the AKP following previous election failures. This is the crux of politics for the immediate future.

Kurds

What will the Kurdish freedom movement do? The AKP and Erdoğan have recently attempted to subdue it by setting up a parliamentary commission, but for almost six months the government has not taken any practical or positive action. After endless talks and taking the opinions of various groups into account, the commission is now considering ways to delay further progress.

Bahçeli and the MHP are calling for a small committee to be elected from the commission to visit the Kurdish leader, Abdullah Öcalan, in Imrali prison. The AKP and Erdoğan were non-committal. CHP seems to be supporting the idea. So, in the near

future we may witness yet another first: a parliamentary committee comprising representatives from all parties talking directly to Öcalan.

Bahçeli is keen to push the idea forward. He has referred to Öcalan as the "founding leader" several times. This is quite a change from calling him a "mass murderer", a "baby killer" and the "chief of terrorists", whenever Bahçeli *et al* were obliged to talk about him. However, the AKP and CHP have not improved their rhetoric about their opponents and still use the old statist-nationalist jargon.

Another important aspect of these deteriorating relations is that corruption investigations - especially those into illegal betting and the misuse of state funds - have started to touch on circles that have been under the protection of the MHP. While the MHP has shown token opposition to the misuse of the judiciary by Erdoğan to crush the CHP - especially by preventing them from working in municipalities - the party's displeasure has become more apparent, now that the same powers have been turned against their own protégés.

The MHP has demanded a high price for supporting Erdoğan's continued rule, and has now become more difficult to satisfy. As it has become the unruly partner of the coalition in the eyes of public opinion, a partnership with the pro-Kurdish People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM) now appears more attractive to it. Their price is clearly the freeing of Abdullah Öcalan and

agreed provisions for former PKK fighters to integrate into 'normal' political life in Turkey.

As Erdoğan needs time to form the next coalition and cling on to power, he will continue to court both far-right Turkish chauvinists and Kurdish freedom movement simultaneously - just as he has done in international relations. By joining the US in Syria and improving its relations with some Muslim countries, he was able to abandon Russian support and reach an £8 billion deal with the UK for buying those 20 Typhoon fighter jets.

As government inactivity seemed to stall the peace process, the Kurdish freedom movement made a further bold move. It declared that its forces had withdrawn from Turkey and the border areas. Erdoğan was now forced to accept this step and directed the chief of the National Intelligence Agency and the military intelligence service to monitor developments and submit a report to the commission. He coined a new term for the Kurdish freedom movement in its current state: a "dissolved terrorist organisation" (PKK, the Kurdish Workers Party, formally dissolved in May 2025 following a historic call from Öcalan).

Europe

Erdoğan reluctantly came to support Bahçeli's position of allowing a committee elected from the commission to visit Imrali prison and meet Öcalan face to face. He also praised Bahçeli for this support in an attempt to defuse tensions. However, Bahçeli is pressing on with his demand for the release of former CHP leader Selahattin Demirtaş, who recently received a favourable ruling from the European Court of Human Rights. Erdoğan and the AKP are not willing to fulfil the ECHR's orders, especially as they are very keen to keep CHP mayors and other politicians in prison on trumped-up charges brought by members of the judiciary whom he has selected and appointed over the years.

It would not be surprising, however, if some Kurdish prisoners are released, while CHP mayors and other left-wing intellectuals remain imprisoned.

Ultimately, the old adage is true: it is not advisable to change horses while crossing a river. Erdoğan and AKP know that they will soon have to cross the Rubicon - the point of no return. The Kurdish peace process, with its links to northern Iraq and northern Syria, must be addressed. There is no turning back. So, when the accumulated signs appear, the end is nigh. However, will it be a total collapse of the coalition, or will a new coalition be formed quickly to keep all interested parties together and maintain stability?

While the AKP and Erdoğan are not in an enviable position, the Kurds may have no choice but to accept the situation in order to avoid jeopardising the peace process ●