

# weekly worker



**Polanski misses his own party's conference. He feared embarrassment, but the membership is overwhelmingly passive**

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Towards a mass Communist Party

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# LETTERS



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

## Seismic threat

The April 1 guilty verdicts, in the case of Palestine Solidarity Campaign director Ben Jamal and Stop the War vice-chair Chris Nineham, are extraordinary and shocking, and a huge setback for civil liberties.

The pair have made clear that they will be appealing these verdicts and they have the full support of the Palestine coalition in that. There are significant concerns about the conduct of the six-day hearing, which will be raised during the appeal.

A key part of the defence was that the conditions imposed on the protest on January 18 2025, which prevented a march to the BBC, were unlawful. The defence submitted a detailed legal argument outlining this case. Extraordinarily, in dismissing this argument, district judge Daniel Sternberg informed the court that he was not obliged to give any reasons for his decision.

The substantive issues at the heart of the case were clear. From the stage that day, Ben Jamal explained that a delegation of leaders of the coalition, plus MPs, trade union leaders and members of the Jewish bloc, would walk peacefully in a symbolic protest towards the BBC to lay flowers to mark the corporation's failures to report the truth of genocide in Gaza. Ben made clear that, if they were stopped by the police, the flowers would be laid at the police line. In the event, as copious video evidence shows, police officers invited the delegation to pass through.

Claims of disorder on the day were simply false. The only moment of violence was when Chris Nineham was brutally pulled to the ground and hauled away by police officers. The logs of the police gold commander, Adam Slonecki, reveal that enormous political pressure was placed on the police by pro-Israel groups to prevent a protest at the BBC.

Today's verdict raises huge concerns about any further powers granted to the police through the Crime and Policing Bill, which is currently progressing through parliament. It confirms the view, widely held across civil society, that these proposed increased powers represent a seismic threat to democratic freedoms.

The unprecedented charging and now conviction of leaders of a movement that has brought millions to the streets in support of the people of Palestine is designed to chill ongoing opposition to genocide, apartheid and illegal occupation. It will not succeed.

**Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
Palestinian Forum in Britain  
Friends of Al-Aqsa  
Stop the War Coalition  
Muslim Association of Britain  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

## YP end game

On March 24, after a fruitful and honest conversation regarding the future for Your Party Stoke and Newcastle, we voted to leave YP and explore other options. As a direct result of this we have chosen, as an organised group, to suspend our support for Your Party, pending a further meeting to decide a future direction.

Those who want to continue supporting Your Party locally will be able to get involved with official branches when the national party sets them up. However, there has been a collective feeling within our group for some time now that the national party's political culture is too toxic. It is obstructing our organising efforts

locally, we have lost people who have not wanted to carry on being involved, and we want a positive, outward-looking project to commit ourselves to.

**YP members  
Stoke**

## YP conference

Since the defeat of the Grassroots Left in the elections to the central executive committee of Your Party, the Corbyn clique has tightened its grip on the party. They control the apparatus, the membership list and the money, while the left has been frozen out. Any decision that the leadership doesn't agree with - like YP Scotland standing in the Holyrood elections - is rejected, not by open argument, but by leaden bureaucratic inaction. The left has been gagged and reduced to irrelevance - not through an open purge (at least not yet), but by attrition.

The left is reeling from this defeat and beginning to disintegrate. The Socialist Workers Party has declared YP a failure and thrown in the towel. Many leftists are either quitting or getting bogged down in destructive fights with no clear political basis. Unclear splits among the left are the last thing we need. Demoralisation is already setting in, especially among the hundreds of young activists who worked tirelessly to make Your Party succeed - who built the proto-branches, organised meetings and did the essential work of party-building. We must not allow this generation of fighters to be dispersed. And to prevent that from happening we must answer the difficult questions, starting with how we got here, and what to do next.

The fundamental problem we face is that there is no political force that workers can look to in order to advance their interests. More and more are looking to Reform or falling into apathy. The situation for the left in YP is tough, but we urge comrades not to leave the party. Quitting will not solve anything, but in fact will play into the hands of Corbyn and his clique, who will be gleeful at the sight of the left tearing itself apart or giving up. Instead, we should take a step back, assess the situation we find ourselves in, and decide collectively where to go from here.

The Greens have now occupied the space that Your Party failed to fill. Of course, the Greens have no solutions to the fundamental problems of this country and all Corbyn can offer is a pale version of the Greens. And, while the opening for building a mass socialist party has closed for the moment, we must remember that one positive development came out of YP - it brought together leftists from different horizons and forced us to discuss the way forward and argue about our differences. This in itself was a step forward. As of now, the immediate priority for the left is to focus on what we may call the 'three Rs': regroup, rethink and rearm.

To do this, we need to come together and address the problem. We propose holding a conference of the left in Your Party, for the purpose of holding a real, open and democratic debate among the various tendencies and groups about how to go forward. The conference should bring together all of the different perspectives and shades of opinion that exist on the left about where to go from here, have a genuine debate on the proposals raised and decide on the next steps. We think it ought to be held as soon as possible to stop the haemorrhaging of members. Obviously, we cannot do this on our own. We encourage comrades to raise it in proto-branches and Grassroots Left CEC members to take up this proposal and set up an organising committee, whose

sole purpose should be to organise a democratic and clarifying conference.

Obviously, a conference will not solve all our problems. But doing nothing is not an option. It will mean the left tearing itself apart or calling it quits, or both. We have a responsibility to try to prevent that from happening.

**Eibhlin McColgan  
Spartacist League**

## Divisive YP nats

Carla Roberts reported last week that Jenn Forbes, chair of the YP central executive committee, did not allow an amendment presented by Niall Christie to be discussed ('Thou shalt not criticise Karie', March 26). Jenn Forbes is one of the 14 supporters of The Many who now control the CEC. Niall is the only supporter of Republic YP on the executive and the only representative elected for Scotland. It is not an easy place to be.

Scotland was always going to be a test for YP politics. Republicans were reminded of this when the Scottish and Welsh parties were only given one representative on the CEC, with two for each English region. Trouble is brewing, because YP's English unionists are determined to 'take back control' of the Scottish party. The Scottish left are not going to accept such bullying.

The left in Scotland is more advanced than England on constitutional issues, because they have been forced to take such matters seriously. In England, economism and social monarchism is the rule, not the exception. This is not to deny that the working class has many common issues to unite around. Even England's constitutional ignoramus should understand the imbalance of a CEC with 22 out of 24 seats from England.

The 'counterrevolution' in YP begins with taking down Scotland on behalf of saving the union. The treatment of Niall Christie is just the opening shot. The situation is even worse because the seven CEC representatives from Grassroots Left are all English Unionists. Carla herself voices the prejudices of the Corbyn-TM-CPGB-Grassroots Left defence of 'Britain'.

All orange-socialists treat the English and Scottish working class like naughty children who cannot unite unless forced to do so by the British ruling class with their unionist constitution. Even Carla, not known as Corbyn's attack dog, starts barking and biting. She makes clear that the CPGB "do not agree with the comrade's (Niall's) politics at all, of course: he is a self-declared Scottish nationalist".

Niall is a Scottish republican and internationalist. Only English chauvinists would call this 'nationalism', whilst being members of the Communist Party of *Great Britain*.

So, we need to remind readers of the Republic YP platform that Niall endorses: Democratic secular republic. End of the union. An English parliament. For autonomous YP parties in England, Scotland and Wales.

The union legitimises the crown's claim to sovereignty over Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The controversy here is the demand for an "end of the union". This comes from a platform which began in England as a democratic demand, which only internationalist republicans recognise, while loyalist unionists and orange socialists condemn it as 'nationalism'.

No democrat, never mind communist, should give any support whatsoever to the anti-democratic union. It is not nationalism for the English and Scottish working class to unite in hostility to a constitutional order imposed on them by Queen

Anne. A similar arrangement was later imposed on Ireland in 1801 until the 1916 Easter Uprising and the Irish revolution.

Carla's final 'coup de grace' against the Scottish working class is to declare, "It is a nonsense to split up our forces into smaller and smaller sections, considering that we are fighting against the British state." There are two obvious points to make. The theory of class struggle as conventional war, in which one big army of capital lines up in trenches in front of another big army of the proletariat and slogs it out, is false. Guerilla war is different.

But her main rationale against a Scottish republic is because "we are fighting against the British state". No, you are not. English, or Anglo-British, unionism, surrendered long ago and is flying the white flag. The main problem is not the democratic aspirations of Scottish nationalism, but English chauvinism. All of this is reflected through the constitution of Your Party.

Your Party is a loyalist-unionist party and therefore follows the classic British Labour model of three parties. One is for the British, and two more are subordinate parties for the Scottish and Welsh. There is no English Labour Party because English members are a majority and are overall in charge and therefore brand themselves as British Labour.

The problem is not Niall's 'nationalism', but English chauvinism, which calls itself British (for example, the Communist Party of *Great Britain*) and claims this is 'internationalism'. The semi-republican Grassroots Left put up a fight and won seven seats on the CEC. They cannot defeat orange socialism because they are tied to it.

Republic YP may only have one supporter on the CEC but has supporters in England and Scotland. As internationalists we are not going to give up until English chauvinism has been defeated.

**Steve Freeman  
Republic Your Party**

## Protest routine

Upon reading the CPGB AGM report I was both surprised and unsurprised to see comments made about Ireland and, more specifically, People Before Profit, by comrade Anne McShane ('Through the Slough of Despond', March 26).

I find her comments on the importance of the "politics of protest" quite fascinating, given our shared involvement in the Palestine movement in Cork city (mine being somewhat limited as of late, due to the vagaries of my employment). While the success of the Cork Palestine Solidarity Campaign (at least in comparison to its sister branches elsewhere in the state) cannot be denied, one does have to ask what form this success has taken, and whether it does actually raise the question of the "politics of protest", as comrade McShane seems to have suggested.

As far as I can see, the success of the CPSC has two forms. Firstly, its ability to hold a weekly rally of between 100 and 300 people every weekend for over two years (which, as we will note later, is a double-edged sword); and, secondly, its admirable, though diminishing, ability to politicise layers of previously unpoliticised people. Both of these successes, though, have their caveats.

The weekly rallies, while impressive, have, as I predicted some time ago, faded into the background noise of the city at large. Their regularity and uniformity has turned the protest from a disruptive display of anger at the unjust and evil actions of genocide being unleashed on the

people of Gaza into just another thing people need to factor into their Saturdays - like the lateness of the 220 bus, or the need to cross the street when you approach Daunt Square, so you can avoid the proselytisers. Its edges softened, its politics dulled, the protest has simply become a weekly reminder of what we have thus far been utterly powerless to prevent.

Nonetheless, CPSC has been able to recruit and train a new generation of Palestine solidarity activists, a hefty chunk of whom had not been involved in any sort of political work previously. This is a success, and has to be applauded. However, again this question of the "politics of protest" comes to the fore, given the actual reality of politics in CPSC. As comrade McShane will herself be intimately aware, the committee of CPSC is dominated by a very reformist and sectarian section of the movement, who have ensured that the politics of the organisation more generally have remained quite moderate. It's here that it is important we are able to take the blinders off and assess CPSC for what it really is: an example of both the successes, but also the very real limitations, of broad, big-tent solidarity movements.

I would note, of course, that PBP recognises this, and our deep involvement, guided by our "ostensible Marxism", reflects this. We organise coherently as a bloc to fight for the politicisation of debates within CPSC, for the adoption of more radical positions, and for the formation of a more leftwing leadership - and, as a positive side effect of this, are able to recruit people who agree with our approach. I therefore question what exactly it is that comrade McShane takes issue with, and why she believes we do not implement Marxism in our day-to-day work - a claim that seems to me to be completely unfounded.

A final note: I, of course, take absolute umbrage to the comparison made between the Socialist Workers Party of Britain and People Before Profit. While it is true that PBP began its life as the electoral front of the SWP's sister organisation here in Ireland, it has grown well beyond that, with the Socialist Workers Network now making up simply a (large) segment of a diverse and pluralist party. Our own recent AGM reflects this, both in the motions passed and the leadership elected, where all non-SWN 'opposition' candidates were elected - two of whom even topped the polls.

I note, that comrade McShane's remark may be the result of some editorialising, nonetheless I would one day like to see such inane comparisons, useful as they may be, rubbished in the name of honesty.

**Niall McGann  
Cork**

## United fronts

I must commend Jack Conrad on his excellent 'Fifteen theses on fascism' in last week's *Weekly Worker* (March 26). They are clear, concise and deserve to be widely read. My only comment would be on number 8, where he discusses "the leftist futility of squads or the quagmire of popular frontism".

The squads haven't existed in practical terms in Britain since the demise of Antifascist Action a quarter of a century ago. With the modern police mass surveillance culture, the far-right YouTube 'auditors' who seek hyperbolic content of clicks and money and the ubiquity of high-definition cameras everywhere (including on personal mobile phones), so-called 'squadist' street tactics would be effectively impossible today, even if the left wanted to engage in them.

What is widespread, however, is popular frontism and, with the Green Party becoming the dominant force on the left, I predict it will get even worse. The politically sharp united front traditions need to be preserved and enacted urgently.

**Paul O’Keeffe**  
email

## Sectarian rubbish

In his article, ‘Misusing the F word’ (March 26), Jack Conrad, adopts the classic sectarian strategy for opposing fascism. He is against any form of unity with the political centre - instead, we are told to provide positive answers to the problems we face: in other words, the socialist programme for revolution. What sectarian, ultra-left gibberish.

We can’t demand that people accept socialism before they are ready to oppose fascism. Also we must not forget that it was an alliance of communists, Labour Party members, anarchists, the Jewish community, liberals and members of various Christian religious denominations who stopped Mosley’s fascists at Cable Street on October 4 1936.

Where has Conrad been all these years? The struggle against the far right in Britain today is not a struggle for power, but rather a struggle for influence. Those on the left who base themselves on ultra-left sectarianism all have one thing in common: they confuse the defensive struggles of the left with the struggle for power. This is the main reason why Trotskyist groups have remained irrelevant sects since the foundation of Trotsky’s Fourth International.

The struggle against British fascism at present - in the defensive stage of the class struggle - means we should create the broadest anti-fascist alliance, just like at Cable Street, without confusing this with the struggle for power. In my view, as far as the defensive stage of the class struggle is concerned, the SWP’s approach is correct, whereas most of the British left remain in a sectarian swamp, when it comes to opposing British fascism.

**Tony Clark**

For Democratic Socialism

## Polanski Alt

The Tapanuli orangutan is listed as ‘critically endangered’, with only around 800 remaining in the wild. Despite the Green Party lauding a monumental surge in membership since the sordid ‘Svengali’, Zack Polanski, became leader, the number of active members appears to be so small that it would probably qualify for a similar form of environmental protection as the desperate Orangutans!

Out of a reported 215,000 members, only around 0.5% showed up at its conference. For a party that prides itself on ‘participatory democracy’, the attendance looked more like ‘participatory minimalism’. Decisions are made by a tiny, self-selecting clique: a Zoomocracy - less a democratic movement, more a detached mailing list.

The conference had intended to vote on the party’s position on Zionism. Even Polanski was himself strategically absent, granting him the political luxury of being both everywhere and nowhere at once. By his absence, the one man band and face of the ‘Green surge’ gave himself plausible deniability for any future questioning on the party’s stance on issues such as Zionism, not to mention Nato and acceptance of capitalism, for example. Not since he was on stage at a Lib Dem conference, proudly (and cringingly) singing and dancing about their austerity government has he been seen to be so happy as he was upon

hearing the party bureaucracy had timed out the vote on Zionism.

Like Jeremy Corbyn before him, Polanski now finds himself cast as the reassuringly familiar face of ‘leftwing populism’ (the aesthetic of insurgency with none of the substance - the rhetoric of moral urgency without material consequence). And, just like Corbyn’s Your Party project, Polanski has the party apparatus to safeguard against the democratic demands of those who see the Greens as a genuine alternative.

As this paper has maintained, the Greens remain an entirely petty-bourgeois party. Despite the increase in dues-paying members, they are a long way from being a vehicle for socialism - far less for communism!

There is a small hope for any readers despairing at the UK Greens appearing to follow the lead of their European counterparts towards acquiescence with the capitalist status quo. For just a small monthly donation, you can sponsor the lesser-spotted Green Party activist in their natural habitat: waiting quietly in a breakout room, existing on little more than snazzy emails, slick TikTok videos and obscure procedural motions. Your support could provide essential resources: a stable wi-fi connection, encouraging more attendees to achieve a quorum, and perhaps even the materialisation of a vote that actually happens.

Act now - before the comrades disappear entirely into the undergrowth of the mailing list and political obscurity.

**Carl Collins**  
email

## Labour confusion

Despite it being bandied about in the century since his death, Lenin never used the phrase, ‘bourgeois workers’ party’, about the British Labour Party (or any other party). Lenin’s speech to the Second Congress of the Third International in August 1920 deals with the Labour Party question; it is from this speech that the meaning of his words has subsequently been turned into its opposite. In his speech he said: “The Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries - and the worst kind of reactionaries at that - who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie.”

Confusion over the ‘bourgeois workers’ party’ mislabelling is not a translation problem, but is certainly a political problem. The label obfuscates and misleads by pretending that the Labour Party is some kind of a workers’ party, when the Marxist definition for a workers’ party is that of a communist party, whose existence is predicated on fighting for socialism and communism. Working class history and politics show us that the Labour Party was not set up for this purpose, has never espoused or expressed one iota of support for this purpose, and fights venomously against this purpose.

The Labour Party’s ideological basis is bourgeois anti-communism - aided and abetted by trade union leaders, whose role is to ensure labour discipline in the workplace for the British state. So, clearly, it is not a workers’ party at all, but is, as Lenin said in 1920, “an organisation of the bourgeoisie, which exists to systematically dupe the workers with the aid of the British Noskes and Scheidemanns”. (The SPD government led by Noske and Scheidemann was responsible for the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in January 1919.)

The descriptor, ‘bourgeois workers’ party’, is something of a shibboleth within today’s CPGB grouping. It bolsters the idea that work within the Labour Party has

been and will be necessary, because Lenin said it was. However, Lenin never suggested that Marxists should work as individuals within the Labour Party. Certainly, the British Socialist Party, -the precursor of the 1920-91 CPGB - had been a Labour affiliate. And Lenin was clear that, if the nascent CPGB were affiliated, and if it then made fierce and open criticism of the Labour Party leadership, it would be of benefit in developing revolutionary consciousness. Relating to this, in the very last words of his 1920 speech, Lenin states his best-case scenario: “If the British Communist Party starts by acting in a revolutionary manner in the Labour Party, and if the Hendersons [LP rightist leaders] are obliged to expel this party, that will be a great victory for the communist and revolutionary working class movement in Britain.” One hundred and six years later, it is impossible any time soon that there might be affiliation to the Labour Party of a revolutionary party or of revolutionary groups including the CPGB: snowballs and hell come to mind.

Subsequent authors - most claiming to be Marxist - have transformed his clear words of condemnation of the Labour Party into this oxymoronic ‘bourgeois workers’ party’ to double down on the need to work within it. This false phrase continues to be trotted out to this day for this very purpose. For example, the CPGB slogan for the most recent UK elections, contains the default position to vote Labour: ‘Vote left where you can, vote Labour if you must’. An over-simple slogan without clear condemnation of the Labour Party or hinting at its real nature as a “thoroughly bourgeois party”, to reiterate Lenin’s words.

There are all kinds of valid alternatives for communist groups and parties in elections, depending on political circumstances: standing candidates on a Marxist platform, supporting candidates of socialist parties, supporting candidates of one or other opposing bourgeois parties to gain working class rights, supporting an organised boycott, etc. But merely issuing a slogan, to vote Labour as a fallback position - without further explanation - when a voter has no socialist candidate to vote for, is incorrect politics, as it bears an association with socialism that the Labour Party does not deserve. Following left parties calling for votes for a reactionary candidate in a French presidential election in order to keep out the ‘fascist’, faux shower booths were set up to wash the political taint off leftist voters outside polling stations. Should we aim to copy this?

For those of us who have spent a decade or more working within the left of the Labour Party - to pretty fruitless effect, it has to said to our discredit - there have been plenty of comradesly discussions with other labour movement activists. But with the normal US lickspittles fully retaking Labour, breaking with that party has meant for a great many the false dawn of Your Party’s bureaucratic nightmare (aka Corbyn’s wet dream), currently disappearing up its own orifice. Enough to put off hundreds from so-called left politics for life; thousands more have flocked to the Green Party and the faux leftism of the petty bourgeoisie. It’s not a pretty sight.

Agitation and propaganda from outside to scour out of the Labour Party those individuals sufficiently convinced of Marxism to join the fight for socialism and communism is one thing. But unless a Marxist organisation can affiliate without constraints or is somehow built within the Labour Party, there is

nothing positive to be gained by calling for a vote for the Labour Party at elections. For the Labour Party is certainly situated well to the right of British politics, with the present Labour government currently in support of the USA/Israeli offensive against Iran and up to its neck backing the Zionist state carrying out genocide in Gaza and stealing land on the occupied West Bank and in Lebanon.

The Labour Party leadership is meanwhile happy to triangulate and continue to move right if self-proclaimed revolutionary groups are suggesting voting Labour, despite every anti-working class, anti-democratic, and inhuman decision and action its government makes and takes. Scurrying along behind the Labour Party is the complete antithesis to what is needed: building a united communist party via its ‘elements’ in Britain’s revolutionary left.

The political movement of the working class is a communist party. Accept no substitutes.

**Jim Moody**  
email

## Kirov conspiracy

Soviet communist leader Sergei Mironovich Kirov was assassinated in Leningrad on December 1 1934 by a disgruntled, misfit Zinovievite (a member of, or associated with, the routed and dispersed ‘left’ opposition faction), named Leonid Nikolaev. Kirov had been a member of the politburo since 1930, was first secretary of the Leningrad Regional Communist Party and, following the 17th Soviet Communist Party Congress in February that year, had been elected one of four secretaries to the central committee.

Sebag Montefiore has stated that during the civil war, Kirov was “one of the swashbuckling commissars in the North Caucasus ... In Astrakhan he enforced Bolshevik power in March 1919 with liberal bloodletting: more than 4,000 were killed. When a bourgeois was caught hiding his own furniture, Kirov ordered him shot.”

Kirov was genuinely popular within the Soviet Communist Party - and among the wider Soviet public as well. Zhores Medvedev described him as part of the second generation of the Soviet Communist

Party leadership, who “had emerged during the revolution, the civil war, the devastation and difficult years of the New Economic Policy” and were “far more united” than the earlier personality-fractious leadership. “These (second generation) men generally had complete confidence in each other and a special friendship, akin to that of soldiers welded together by common interests. They made a far better impression with ordinary party members and the Soviet public than, say, the arrogant hauteur of a Trotsky or the learned dogmatism and the intellectual irresolution of such as Kamenev and Zinoviev.”

Although nothing like the same degree as with the JFK assassination, Kirov’s murder spawned a number of conspiracy theories, and there did appear to be a link between the events immediately following the assassination and the later *Yezhovshchina* of 1937-38 (aka the Great Purge).

The principal conspiracy theories around Kirov were spawned and mixed together by an unholy concoction of Mensheviks, Trotskyists, CIA-funded cold war propaganda channels and US academia, and need to be seen in that very harsh light. One of the original routes of their propagation was *Letter from an old Bolshevik* by Boris Nikolaevsky, an exiled Menshevik. He claimed he had interviewed Nikolai Bukharin in Paris, who allegedly stated that Kirov headed a moderate faction within the Politburo, opposing an apparent ‘radical’ leadership faction headed by Stalin, and which either was nullifying Stalin’s wishes or was threatening to remove him from office. A nice little concocted fairy tale, but that was all it was. One clue is that Nikolaevsky’s alleged interlocutor talks about one of the Moscow Trials which, at the time Bukharin was in Paris, hadn’t even taken place!

More decisively, Bukharin’s young widow, Anna Larina, in her memoirs, written and published in the Soviet Union during perestroika and glasnost in the late 1980s, which meant she was able to speak freely and openly, bitterly disputed the claim that Bukharin was any kind of source for Nikolaevsky, and held Nikolaevsky responsible for placing Bukharin’s life in danger through his false claims.

**Andrew Northall**  
Kettering

## Fighting fund

### Near miss

Thanks very much to all the comrades who made last-minute donations to try and ensure we reached that £2,750 *Weekly Worker* fighting fund target for March. An excellent £551 was received in the last six days of the month, but unfortunately that left us exactly £100 short!

Many thanks to JC (£70), RL (£60), AG (£50), MW (£30), JT, BK and BH (£25 each), AB and JP (£20), IS (£17), JM (£15), JD and MD (£10) and AR (£5) - all via standing order or one-off bank transfer. Then we had our PayPal donors: JB and DB (£50), ES (£8), plus DI and AC (£5). Finally, GB handed £50 in cash to a comrade on last Saturday’s Together Alliance demonstration in London, while an anonymous comrade added a pound coin.

As I say, all that came to £551, which, when added to the £2,099 previously received, took us up to £2,650 - short, but not by much. But let’s not worry too much

about that - these things happen. So now we want to make sure we not only reach that target in April but also make up for March’s shortfall.

And, with just one day gone, as I write, we already have £289 in the kitty! Thanks very much to comrades BO and LC (£50 each), TG (£25), PR (£24), DL, MT and SJ (£20), CP (£16), AN and BG (£15), MR (£13), MM (£11) and DI (£10). They all came in via SO/ bank transfer and amounted to £289 - not bad for just one day!

So now let’s make sure we not only make up for March’s near miss but go shooting past that £2,750 target in April. You can do it! ●

**Robbie Rix**

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

## DEMONSTRATION

# Together, but for what?

Hundreds of thousands rallied in central London on March 28. Yes, the spirit was great. Yes, it was much bigger than Tommy Robinson's 'Unite the kingdom' rally. But where, asks **Ian Spencer**, does the Together Alliance's broad-as-possible politics take us?

**W**e formed up on Park Lane, for the march to Whitehall for the speeches, before going onto Trafalgar Square for the music gig. The organisers claimed there were 500,000 of us - of course, it is hard to know the true figure, but it was certainly huge.

WhatsApp messages filled the air, as people still on the way to central London expressed their anxiety at missing out on the great event, because they were stuck in the traffic. But they need not have worried: it was about two hours before there was any forward movement at all.

After helping to distribute the *Weekly Worker*, I joined the Your Party bloc outside the Dorchester Hotel (of which more later). About three hours later, I had shuffled as far as Hyde Park Corner, while the head of the demo had already reached Whitehall. Yes, it was that big. Not as big as the demonstration against the Iraq war, but up there - approaching the size of the first, very big Palestine solidarity demo at the start of the genocide.

The demonstration against the far right was organised by the Together Alliance - described on its website as "made up of hundreds of civil society organisations representing over seven million people".<sup>1</sup> These included trade unions, charities, faith and environmental groups and community activists. They certainly had the endorsement of a smattering of celebs, such as Lenny Henry, Paloma Faith and Billy Bragg.

In the lead bloc were, among others, MPs Zarah Sultana, Jeremy Corbyn and Zack Polanski as the spectre at the feast. After all, while Your Party, started with a high of 800,000 expressions of interest (just think, a lot more than the multitude that were here on the day), it had seen steady haemorrhage of membership and hope ever since. By contrast, the Greens have seen spectacular growth - up to around 220,000 paid-up members, not to mention success in by-elections. Not only that, but Zack would also get to speak at the rally and dance on stage at the gig!

After the lead bloc, it was striking that there was a sizable presence of trade union banners and members (it feels very odd today to catch a whiff of the Labour Party at a demo). There were teachers, civil servants, firefighters, industrial and general workers unions - all this in stark contrast to the Palestine solidarity demonstrations, where calls to close down industries with links to the Israeli and complicit UK arms industry seem to cause discomfort, particularly to the GMB union.

Others, many of whom remembered the million-strong demonstration against the Iraq war, were outraged at the latest UK support for yet another illegal US-led war, and make no mistake, not because they had any illusions in the Iranian government as part of an 'axis of resistance'. There was a sizable bloc of Iranians opposed to the Tehran theocracy, as well as the imperialist violence against the people of Iran.

Faith groups - Jewish, Muslim, Christian and more besides - made up another large bloc. Over 20 Christian groups were marching "against Christian nationalism and the far-right's use of Britain's 'Christian heritage' to justify racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric".<sup>2</sup> This included pacifist Quakers, and even



**Liberal politics cannot defeat the far-right threat**

the Church of England were out in force. It is a funny old world when, as a result of the current Labour government's policies, the C of E can look as though it is part of the left opposition.

The day had a carnival atmosphere, aided by good weather, which helped the creative arts make their contribution. In one place there were papier mache parodies of Trump; in another a punky reinterpretation of Morris dancing. Seriously.

Naturally, political groups made up a very large bloc. Of course, the exuberance of this or that group is not a scientific insight into their relative health, but, if it were, the Socialist Party in England and Wales seemed to be in decline, but still present in some numbers. By contrast another shard from the fracture of Militant, the Revolutionary Communist Party, were out in force and in good voice. The Socialist Workers Party was out in large numbers - both as themselves and as their Stand up to Racism avatar.

The Greens too were out on the streets - not just quantitatively, but qualitatively different: a reflection of the influx of hundreds or thousands of new members, many obviously having previously been in left groups and having brought with them their own culture of protest and demonstration

elan. After all, Polanski's appearance on stage was not an accident.

The demonstration may have been billed as a gathering of groups against Farage, Netanyahu and Trump, but it was mostly focused on Farage. There was not much from the platform about Palestine or Iran and little criticism of the government. There was even a video from London mayor Sadiq Khan. Billy Bragg was claiming from the platform that only Labour could defeat Farage - the same Labour Party that is a co-belligerent in the ongoing genocide in Palestine and now the slaughter in Iran.

People appalled at the Palestine genocide made up large numbers at the demonstration - they are determined to continue their resistance, despite increasing state oppression and calculated indifference from the media. The Labour government has shown itself as much against protest as it is in favour of the proscription of Palestine Action (and the restriction of the centuries-old right to trial by jury, as is, of course, the Tory opposition).

During the day, the Metropolitan Police arrested 18 people, who, it said, had staged a demonstration in support of Palestine Action, outside New Scotland Yard, even though the proscription of PA had been ruled unlawful in the high court. The

justification for this was that home secretary Shabana Mahmood had lodged an appeal.

The Your Party bloc included a few hundred people from all over the country, despite the party's leadership having given no public support and done nothing to organise or facilitate their presence. It was entirely the efforts of party members themselves, in organised proto-branches, which the leadership seems to have no intention of recognising.

Massive demonstrations can play an important role, but then what? We all knew what we were against, even if, for different groups, the emphasis was many and varied. Certainly, most were determined that this demonstration should be a damn sight bigger than Tommy five-name's flag fest in order to ensure that Reform will not have a clear run in putting forward Farage as a UK Trump. But what are we for?

The demonstration's themes of 'love, hope and unity' are set against the backdrop of a global political shift to the right. This is not because of some resurgence of 'fascism' (see last week's *Weekly Worker*<sup>3</sup>), but because this is capitalism, red in tooth and claw. Whereas, in response to the existence of the USSR, a right reformist social democracy once became economic

orthodoxy, allied to the concession of the welfare state, now the US State Department is actively promoting far-right movements and groups across Europe and beyond.<sup>4</sup>

There is no obvious sign that this will change anytime soon. Mid-term elections in the US and the May local elections in the UK may be the harbinger of change, but I doubt we will see a significant shift away from the march to war. The question is, will it bring into being the kind of movement that can assert the class interests of workers over the arms manufacturers and those committed to maximising profit at all costs?

I know a lot of people who have talked in social media about how uplifting they found last weekend's demonstration, but without a movement that can express the interests of our class it will, unfortunately, remain in the collective memory as part of some forlorn hope ●

### Notes

1. [toolkit.togetheralliance.org.uk/about-the-alliance-2](https://toolkit.togetheralliance.org.uk/about-the-alliance-2).
2. [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/thousands-join-london-march-against-christian-nationalism](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/thousands-join-london-march-against-christian-nationalism).
3. 'Misusing the F-word': [weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1578/misusing-the-f-word](https://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1578/misusing-the-f-word).
4. [www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2026/02/09/the-us-is-funding-our-far-right](https://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2026/02/09/the-us-is-funding-our-far-right).

## GREENS



Good turnout from the Green Party on March 28 - but why didn't they attend the spring conference?

# Getting ready to govern

It is very telling that Zack Polanski missed his own party's conference. He feared embarrassment. But he need not have worried. The Greens have plenty of checks and balances against democracy and the membership is largely passive, says **Carla Roberts**

**O**ddly, we have to start this article with a disclaimer, as there are rumours going around that yours truly is a member of the Green Party! This has been spread by Hannah Hawkins, a member of Your Party's central executive committee, who was elected as part of Jeremy Corbyn's The Many slate.

Hawkins is obviously not among the brightest or well-versed, when it comes to the left, but still, come on! Not only is the *Weekly Worker* the paper of the *Communist Party of Great Britain*, but we have been very critical of socialists bigging up and sowing illusions in the Greens, which we have categorised politically as a petty bourgeois formation in countless articles. She probably has not read any of them, but to come out with nonsense like that says a lot about the quality of YP's CEC.

It is also telling that she uses the Green Party as the bogeyman - and it is easy to see why: with 220,000 members, 17% in the latest polls and its media-savvy leader, Zack Polanski, it looks like a much bigger, much more successful and hugely more vibrant version of Corbyn's failing vanity project. The soft-left 'messaging' is almost identical, but the Greens do it so much better. No wonder that YP has been haemorrhaging thousands of members to the Greens.

And, despite what happened at its March 28 spring conference, it is also a whole lot more democratic than Your Party. At least members *can* join branches and *are* able to bring motions to conference. At YP's launch conference, sortitioned attendees could only choose between pre-prepared 'options' on various issues selected by Corbyn's right-hand woman, Karie Murphy. While the internal structures of the Greens might be slightly better than those of YP (it would be difficult to imagine they could be worse), they are, of course, a far cry from the kind of democracy we would see in a real mass working class party, with vibrant and autonomous branches discussing policy, moved at the sovereign conference by democratically elected and accountable delegates.

### Greens Organise

Instead, Green Party conference is open to *any member* who wants to go. There is no delegate structure. All you have to do is pay £10 (£5 if you are unwaged) and you can attend. Their hybrid conference in October 2025 in Bournemouth was attended by 1,800 members - online and in the

hall. At that time, the party had just passed 100,000 members. Today the Greens have over 220,000 members - and yet only 700 attended the spring conference, although it took place entirely online. That is a measly 0.3% of the entire membership!

We could not believe these dismal figures at first, but they appear to be correct.<sup>1</sup> The organisers had brought in technology that would have allowed 90,000 members to vote online<sup>2</sup> (though in the end the system failed and members voted on Zoom by the 'raise hand' function). But the point is: there seems to have been no upper limit to the number of participants who *could* have participated.

### Together march

Yes, there was the Together march in London on the same day, but we can say with absolute certainty that there were not 219,300 Green Party members marching. There was a healthy Green Party presence, but we would be very surprised if there were more than 500 of them. And, as the March 28 spring conference took place entirely online, they could have joined on their mobile phones during or after the demo.

These figures certainly put the 'Green surge' into an entirely different perspective. Compare that to the 11,000 YP members who voted during the launch conference and the 24,000 who participated in the CEC elections - out of 55,000 members. Yes, most are largely passive (who were partially mobilised through postcards being sent out by YP HQ) - but at least they could be bothered to vote!

It appears that the Green Party cannot even be described as an online party along the lines of Podemos or Momentum, where members occasionally participate in this or that email referendum. The Greens are even less than that. It is largely an electoral machine, which comes to life for this or that local contest.

This pathetic turnout also begs the question: whatever happened to the much-fawned over Greens Organise grouping? It claims "over a thousand paid-up members", who pay at least £1 each per month.<sup>3</sup> To do what exactly? Certainly not to mobilise for Green conferences. There are no events listed on its website, its social media consists of reposting stuff from the leadership and it does not even mention conference.

Some want us believe that GO is made up of dedicated socialists

trying to push the Greens to the left. If that is the case, surely they should have mobilised to fight, for example, against the motion which removed a previous commitment to nationalise "the five largest energy supply companies". This was replaced at spring conference with a plan for "diversity of ownership, including private, public, municipal and community schemes", so that "consumers will have a choice between diverse retailers operating with fair competition". Only 192 members voted to oppose the change, with 478 voting in favour.<sup>4</sup>

This was clearly a move to the right, to show that the Greens are not the 'nutty semi-socialist' party that the *Daily Mail* tries to paint them. No, they want to prove that they can and will be reliable servants of the system, all the while posing left to exploit that huge political gap in British politics.

While Greens Organise seems to have closed shop after campaigning to get Zack Polanski elected, there are a number of more activist-orientated groups like Greens for Palestine, Greater Manchester Greens and Muslim Greens. These were all in support of the now famous 'Zionism is racism' motion moved by British-Palestinian artist Lubna Speitan. However, the motion could muster no more than 333 co-signatories in the run-up to conference - which might indeed be a "record", as Speitan claims. But, out of a membership of 220,000, that is utterly insignificant.

### Anti-Zionism

It is very telling that Zack Polanski missed his own party's conference. Instead, he not only chose to give a speech at the Together march, but stayed for the whole day, raving (very well) on the Trafalgar Square stage afterwards. He will have judged - correctly - that the viral clips of him dancing with Hannah Spencer will do a lot more for Green electoral chances in the May elections than engaging in an 'internal' debate about Zionism.

It also means he can continue to fudge on the issue. He has been u-ing and ah-ing his way through a number of questions on the subject. *Politico* had previously reported that "Polanski would have supported the motion" entitled 'Zionism is racism'.<sup>5</sup> That is very doubtful indeed. For example, Green councillor Andree Frieze tweeted after conference: "Importantly, Green MP Carla Denyer was planning to speak

against the motion on behalf of the MPs, peers, leader Zack Polanski and deputy leader Rachel Millward."<sup>6</sup> She was going to speak after Lubna Speitan, apparently - but, as we all know, conference "ran out of time". We hear that deputy leader Mothin Ali is in fact the only top person who supports the motion.

The Greens do not have an expert bureaucrat like Karie Murphy, who has decades of experience in manipulating and stage-managing conferences, but they have certainly made use of the same playbook to sideline Speitan's motion. Not only did the right in and around the Greens make ample use of bourgeois media outlets in the run-up to conference to attack the (pretty bog-standard) motion as "anti-Semitic": they pulled out all the stops at conference itself. There were numerous motions of no-confidence in the chair (who kept allowing them); there was an effort to disallow the motion for not "following due process"; there was an attempt to rule it out of order because it would override the Green Party's support for the so-called 'two-state solution'; then the agenda was changed during a break, pushing the motion further and further to the back and, finally, there was filibustering and time-wasting, making sure that it *had* to fall off the agenda.<sup>7</sup>

Polanski will no doubt continue to play a game of posing left, while leaving the party's support for Nato untouched. He will continue to talk about his support for the Palestinians, while not trying to overturn the party's support for the IHRA mis-definition of anti-Semitism. At the same time, Polanski is now touring various unions and has already held "fruitful" talks with 10 of them,<sup>8</sup> in the hope of getting donations and burnishing his 'left' reputation. He is, in other words, the prime example of a good bourgeois politician who is covering all bases.

He is very much getting the party ready to enter government, albeit as a junior coalition partner.

### Targets

The Greens are certainly expected to do well in the May elections:

A list of Green targets seen by *The Times* shows Hackney, Lambeth, Islington and Southwark as the party's top targets for taking control directly from Labour. Polanski's party also hopes to enter coalitions in Norwich,

Bradford, East Sussex, Suffolk and Newcastle. Other targets include Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester, as well as Cambridge, Oxford, Exeter, Reading, East Surrey and South Tyneside.<sup>9</sup>

Some comrades on the left hope that the Greens would soon 'expose themselves' by 'enforcing cuts', which would drive tens of thousands of the more leftwing members back into YP (or into one or the other confessional sects). That seems, to put it mildly, unlikely. The Greens - as we now know beyond a shadow of doubt - are not made up of a large, active, left membership that holds its representatives critically to account. The vast majority are passive, and just want things to change a little bit. Most members will be very happy with the Greens becoming part of local government coalitions.

The fact that there is no real left opposition in the Greens does not mean that socialists should "seize the opportunity and build one", as quite a few confused lefties are now advocating. The Greens are and remain a petty-bourgeois formation (ie, they fight to reform capitalism in the interest of the petty bourgeoisie). They might soon enough become a *thoroughly* bourgeois party, especially if they get called into a potential anti-Reform coalition after the 2029 general election - not an impossible prospect.

Judging by the Together demonstration, much of the left would support that; and we note that Mothin is one of the main speakers at the launch of the SWP's latest popular front, Stop Reform UK.<sup>10</sup> A total dead end that not only blurs class lines, but ends up supporting all those failing bourgeois parties that have led to the rise of Reform in the first place ●

### Notes

1. www.thecanary.co.uk/news/2026/03/28/green-party-conference-votes.
2. www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBXHKG4zL-E.
3. greensorganise.uk/about.
4. www.thecanary.co.uk/news/2026/03/28/green-party-conference-votes.
5. www.politico.eu/article/uk-green-zack-polanski-zionism-is-racism-motion.
6. x.com/ani\_says1/status/2038393520080224502.
7. Some of the issues are covered here: x.com/LefieStats/status/2038935250244435981/photo/1.
8. *The Times* March 30.
9. *The Times* March 31.
10. bit.ly/stopreform26.

## GREENS

# Getting the right headlines

James Meadway's 'DOGE of the left' is very much about marketing and very little about substance. Despite the technocratic wonkery, there can be no escaping basic class and global realities. Paul Demarty assesses eco-populism and finds it wanting

A strange document crosses our desk: *Waste not*,<sup>1</sup> the first production of a Green Party-aligned think tank calling itself Verdant.

A lot of effort seems to have been put into ensuring the right splashy headlines appeared in the right places: "DOGE of the left" could save UK taxpayers up to £30 billion, says new green thinktank,<sup>2</sup> wrote The Guardian. Questioned on social media about the wisdom of this framing, James Meadway - left-Keynesian economist, formerly of Counterfire and Corbynism, and the report's primary author - asserted that "it gets us the headline and the story". Perhaps we could also launch a Green ICE, or a left Proud Boys, quipped the Weekly Worker's Twitter account. "Read the report," an increasingly testy Meadway harrumphed.

I say that too. There are things to say about the content of the report, and we will get to that, but, given the enthusiasm with which Meadway pursued his scandalous headline, one has to begin with the basics here. This is an extremely boring report. But for the colour scheme, it has the strong impression of some document farted out of the bowels of Whitehall. Examples are given of public-sector wastefulness, and plausible-sounding, wonky fixes are proposed. The original, American DOGE is denounced - the 'DOGE of the left' bit seems basically to come down to hiring a government waste tsar - sorry, a 'Chief Savings Officer'.

### Marketing

Is this the exciting new phenomenon of eco-populism before us? With this document - all infographics and colourful boxouts, like a slide deck from one of the management consultancies so frequently denounced in its pages - it would seem not. There is nothing populist *per se* about a policy slate that includes better training for HMRC officials, more audits of third-party contracts by sensible experts, and the expansion of the civil service to include its own "consultancy" organisation.

On the other hand, it might be argued, the right has made a lot of hay denouncing waste - not only DOGE, but, as the report reminds us, the various oddballs who have set themselves up as Reform UK councillors, who seem genuinely to have believed that millions of pounds were being spent by district councils on racial sensitivity training and pronoun badges. It is perfectly consonant with a broadly leftwing outlook to denounce, as *Waste not* does, tax takings left on the table, extraordinary failures of procurement in the military, and so on.



US version was a complete con too

The truly eco-populist character of all this, however, lies precisely in the *coincidence* of the technicolour media launch and the battleship-grey wonkery. Because, at the end of the day, eco-populism is not some elemental upsurge from the dispossessed, as the original populism, in the American upper Midwest, was a quite genuine popular revolt on the part of smallholders and proletarians against robber barons and political corruption. Eco-populism is a clever branding strategy cooked up by professional political marketers. As the old cliché goes, the most important thing in life is sincerity: if you can fake that, you've got it made.

Once the word, 'marketing', has attached itself, in your mind, to all this, it will get stuck there. This is from Verdant's self-description in the report: "We are committed to shaping inclusive policies that don't just analyse ideas: we build them collaboratively, bringing citizens and experts together to design the next chapter of progressive politics in the UK." This could be taken more or less verbatim from any 'socially conscious' branding agency in Clerkenwell or Shoreditch. They will take care of the ideas; the grateful plebs will be stunned by the popular appeal of the proposed measures, as Melanesian natives supposedly were by the flying machines of the US air force during World War II, and dutifully troop out to vote for them.

### Populisms

Lest I be accused of picking unfairly on Meadway and other peripheral figures in the Polanskiverse, I think this is basically a problem with every compound noun suffixed with "populism". We have left- and right-

populism, and even the 'techno-populism' of the *soi-disant* 'radical centre'. All are quite clearly attempts to marry particular substantive programmes with the rhetorical style of populism.

More honourable, I think, are those - like Christopher Lasch, say, or some writers associated with the American magazine *The Baffler*, such as Thomas Frank and Chris Lehmann - who genuinely think the *positive programme* of 19th century populism has some value and contemporary relevance. That programme, as described a little over-romantically in Lasch classics like *The true and only heaven*, is a strongly producerist doctrine of self-reliance within thick social bonds, and in the name of such an idea of the good life, the decadent rich and plebeian scroungers alike are denounced. There are problems with this, to put it mildly, but it remains a *prima facie* serious position, deserving of intellectual respect.

Modern 'populism' simply detaches the substance; what remains is merely the tactical manoeuvre of framing one's own political hobby horse, whatever it happens to be, as a battle between honest, salt-of-the-earth ordinary folks, and a manipulative, tyrannical and somehow alien elite. This is intrinsically manipulative in a way that the sermons of William Jennings Bryan were not. But it is also sort of ridiculous - because, of course, this political topography of the elite and the people is contested. Reform's 'populists' will denounce the woke 'elite' and take pleasure in listing Meadway's various different degrees; Meadway can hit back, as many of the left do, by describing the vast flow of dodgy American billionaire money into Reform coffers.

Of course, people continue to vote for such outfits. How closely the general run of Green or Reform voter *really* buys this 'populist' framing is imponderable. Once a voter has discovered that the various political parties are trying to manipulate them, they still have the same choice of candidates before them, and will decide one way or another. My suspicion is that it is not the voters who are the gullible cargo-cultists in this scenario, but the political operatives, who have convinced themselves that a few off-the-peg branding tricks carry overwhelming force in political combat.

The problem with populism, even in its honest, substantive form, is that it

assumes a unity of political-economic interests through the popular classes that does not in fact exist. Of course, for the quasi-populist political operator, it does not matter *per se* that this is false - only that it is effective in deceiving the marks (but that means hiding the problem).

*Waste not* illustrates this problem quite strikingly in its pages on the leakage of tax revenue. The report identifies an enormous "tax gap" - that is, the difference between what is paid and what, in aggregate, HMRC thinks must be owed - specifically in the small business sector: "If the small business tax gap were closed at the same rate as large and medium-sized businesses, £9.5 billion in extra tax would have been collected".

### Small business

True enough, no doubt, but of course the Greens are a party fundamentally of small business, and so there immediately follows a bunch of throat-clearing and embarrassed waffle:

We note the difficulties currently faced by small businesses, which may well be reflected in this rising tax gap, and suggest a constructive approach from a better-resourced HMRC would aim to close much of this gap, in addition to also seeking opportunities to close remaining tax gaps from medium-sized and larger enterprises ... [and] disregarding special interest pleading for the protection of obscure loopholes in the tax system.

Does Meadway really think he has found a way to 'close the tax gap' *without getting more money out of small businesses* (or, on the other hand, massive tax cuts)? Of course not: but here is a situation where there is real conflict of interests between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat; that is, a situation where the 'people' of the populists is shown not, precisely, to exist. (Is the "special interest pleading" denounced here, moreover, to include green tech subsidies...?)

The classic populist opposition between the direct producers and the banks, landlords and big capitalists ultimately produces a primarily moralistic account of class division. The producer is virtuous; the man who lives off interest or rent is given to dissolution and vice. This in turn produces the illusion we have already seen, of a greater commonality of interest among the plebs than in fact

exists; but it also tends to oversimplify the problem of the ruling class. For if the problem of the government is that it is captured by the preterite, then it should be possible - surely? - to put in place a *virtuous* government. (Among contemporary writers, this idea is best expressed by the rightwing Catholic, Patrick Deneen, and his concept of 'aristo-populism'.)

Thus the impression one gets reading this report: the government is wasteful because it is run by the incompetent and the corrupt, and a new broom could fix a lot of the leaks. 'Waste' is defined up-front indifferently to substantive political goals: "If the government spends money that it need not have spent to achieve some policy objective, this is waste." Meadway makes a good case that a lot of money is, in this way, wasted on management consultants from the 'Big Four' largest professional service networks, plus McKinsey, etc, and a lot more wasted in defence procurement. In this, he is surely correct in the narrow sense of whether the weapons we are supposedly paying for actually appear at the end of the contract.

The wrinkle is that Britain has what prosperity it does on account of its role in the world system, which is as America's money laundry and occasional military sidekick. Defence procurement is wasteful, in part, *as a bribe to the Americans*, who supply most of the arms - in return for which we get some measure of 'military protection' and the right to pretend we have an independent nuclear deterrent. The free hand of the global consultancy firms, meanwhile, is merely one aspect of the 'money laundry' (another, of course, is the leakiness of HMRC).

These *larger* structures of power also, ultimately, make initiatives like this into duds. "For too long, the language of efficiency has been ceded by progressives," *Waste not* opens. "This report argues that reclaiming it is not just possible, but essential." Meadway cannot, surely, imagine that he is the first leftwinger to complain about military industrial waste. It is not that 'progressives' are shy about denouncing waste, as they see it, and therefore the right has the upper hand on this matter, but more or less the exact reverse - the right has the upper hand *because of capitalist control of mainstream politics and the media*, and therefore the left cannot 'control the narrative' without challenging that power itself.

That, of course, is no small problem, but it can be done, even on a relatively small scale. Coherent, disciplined party-movements have the potential to coerce the capitalist class and to pierce the veil of bourgeois media obfuscation. Pseudo-populist wonkery is, in the end, the politics of despair: if everything is a matter of canny marketing, then we are doomed, since we will never have the biggest marketing budget, and so cunning tricks like rebranding waste as a 'progressive issue' will inevitably look ridiculous. The point, rather, is to stop marketing from working at all ●

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### Notes

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2. www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/mar/25/doge-of-the-left-save-uk-taxpayers-30bn-green-thinktank.

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SOLIDARITY

# We will not be silent

Claims by the Irish government to be a staunch ally of Palestine have been well and truly exposed. However, while Micheál Martin kowtows before imperialism, members of Kneecap show a brave defiance. They are far from alone. **Anne McShane** reports

As the mass movement continues against the US-Israeli onslaught in the Middle East, our taoiseach has been toadyingly pledging his allegiance to the war criminals in London and Washington.

Keir Starmer arrived in Cork on March 12 for a UK-Ireland summit with business leaders and politicians, and Micheál Martin was there to warmly welcome him. His determination to ensure that protestors did not spoil the jamboree meant that the city was practically locked down. The union jack was raised over Cork City Hall, above the monuments honouring the former mayors, Tomas MacCurtain (shot by the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1920), and Terence McSwiney, who succeeded him, and who died on hunger strike in Brixton prison in protest against British rule. Inside, Starmer was treated to an evening of Irish music and poetry, while hundreds of protestors, enraged at the obsequiousness of the occasion, tried to make their voices heard.

The following day, Martin and Starmer agreed a deal to expand and intensify defence cooperation. This will build on the existing deals on maritime and cyber security, as well as information sharing. Again, Sir Keir was shielded from opposition to his visit, as the Public Order Unit closed in on protestors and forcibly moved them on. The POU informed the mounted officers that the order had come straight from the top.

A few days later Martin was off to Washington with his bowl of shamrock, to bow and scrape before the man himself. Loyally defending Starmer against Trump's complaints that he was not helping with the war on Iran, he urged the great man not to be too angry with the prime minister, stating: "I do believe that he's a very earnest, sound person that you have a capacity to get along with. You've got along with him before." He also wanted Trump to be less angry with Europe, counselling him to understand that it is "characterised wrongly in terms of it being overrun", and assuring him that soon there will be even "stronger mechanisms in place" to keep the 'unwanted' out. On Iran, Micheál agreed that "everyone accepts that you cannot have a rogue state with a nuclear weapon" but claimed that he was "hoping for peace".<sup>1</sup>

At home, the enactment of the Occupied Territories Bill, which seeks to impose a legal boycott of Israeli goods and services from the West Bank, is going nowhere. The legislation was passed in 2018, but the Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael coalition has avoided implementing it for the last eight years, claiming 'legal problems'. Last year they produced a watered-down version of the bill and the tanáiste (deputy premier), Simon Harris, recently made a vague comment that "it could well be put before the Dáil this side of the summer".

Clearly the very last thing the government wants to do is implement a boycott. It has been warned repeatedly by US governments that there will be a mass exit of US companies if it does - and, of course, now it has the threat of a hike in tariffs under Trump. We need to understand that Ireland is a loyal and very junior member of the imperialist world order and will do nothing to upset its masters. That is why making overtures to the government based on



**DJ Próvaí: Free Palestine! ... and Hands off Cuba!**

Irish so-called neutrality is a hopeless and delusional activity.

As Martin prepared to welcome Starmer to Cork on March 12, another Irishman, Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh ('Mo Chara') was celebrating the fact that the day before the court of appeal in London had thrown out allegations of 'terrorism' brought against him. Ó hAnnaidh and his bandmates in Kneecap were targeted by the British government because of their outspoken condemnation of it as a supporter of genocide. The witch-hunt against Kneecap began after the Coachella music festival in California on April 11 2025, when they ended their concert by projecting a clear, repeated message: "Israel is committing genocide"; "It is being enabled by the US government, who arm and fund Israel despite their war crimes"; 'Fuck Israel, free Palestine'.

In the uproar that followed, Martin pleaded with the group to apologise. But they refused, doubling down on their argument by insisting that it is Israel, the US and the UK which are terrorist states.

The following month, the British counter-terrorism police were instructed to find charges which would stick. A trawl through social media led to Ó hAnnaidh being charged with threatening death to Tories and of supporting a proscribed organisation - Hezbollah. Both of the allegations stemmed from stage performances more than a year before. The first was dropped in July during Glastonbury, where the group was playing - only to be replaced with more allegations said to arise from their performance, which in turn were also dumped for lack of evidence.

Then at Westminster magistrates

court on September 26, after three court appearances - each one attended by hundreds of supporters - chief magistrate Paul Goldspring found that the charge of supporting a terrorist organisation was null and void because it had been outside the six-month limit to bring a charge and the police had failed to obtain the permission of the attorney general - essential in terrorism cases. Yet Keir Starmer refused to back down, and the Crown Prosecution Service lodged an appeal in January 2026 - only again to be thrown out on March 11, this time by two judges at the court of appeal. Ó hAnnaidh's legal team included Blinne Ní Ghráiligh KC, who had presented South Africa's case against Israel before the International Court of Justice in 2024.

After the hearing, his solicitor, stated that the entire affair had been

"a legally laughable witch-hunt" that was "born at Coachella, cultivated in Westminster, comes to an end in west Belfast." Liam Óg asserted:

This entire process was never about me, never about any threat to the public and never about 'terrorism' - a word used by the British government to discredit people you oppress both in Ireland and across the world. It was always about Palestine and about what happens if you dare to speak up - about what happens if you can reach large groups of people and expose their hypocrisy.

To their credit, neither he nor other Kneecap members are prepared to stay silent. As Ó hAnnaidh stated, "If anyone on this planet is guilty of terrorism, it's the British state". He added: "Free Palestine. Tíocfaidh ár Lá [our day will come]." To ram home their opposition to imperialism the group joined Jeremy Corbyn, Clara López, Pablo Iglesias and Chris Smalls in the Nuestra América Convoy to deliver humanitarian aid, including medicines and solar panels, to Cuba. They want to draw attention to the collective punishment of the nine million Cuban population by the US.

Since Trump forced Venezuela to impose an embargo on oil exports to the island in January, Cuban society has been plunged into an existential crisis. It is almost completely reliant on oil for electricity, but Trump is making sure it gets no more than drip-feed supplies (the arrival of the Russian-owned tanker carrying 750,000 barrels of oil in late March was the first delivery since January). Hence, healthcare in Cuba is now reaching breaking point, as electricity blackouts put patients at serious risk. The system has been in almost permanent malfunction because of a lack of supplies, staff and medicine. Even ambulances are struggling to respond to emergencies. Thousands are waiting for urgent surgery and pregnant women fear giving birth in these appalling conditions.

Meanwhile, many are expecting a US invasion - with Cuban society on its knees. Of course, that will not happen. But that does not stop Trump arrogantly proclaiming that he will take it back (between 1898 and 1902 Cuba was a *de facto* American protectorate and remained a client state till 1959). On March 16 he announced he would have the 'honour' of taking the island over, 67 years after the Cuban revolution: "Whether I free it, take it, I think I can do anything I want with it".

Cuba's president Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez responded: "Any external aggressor will clash with an impregnable resistance." In the meantime, there are behind-the-scenes talks, with claims that Trump wants a compliant puppet regime along the lines of Venezuela (not impossible).

Trump appears to have boundless confidence. That means imperial bullying, war threats and war. Never has the organisation of the international working class been more urgent •

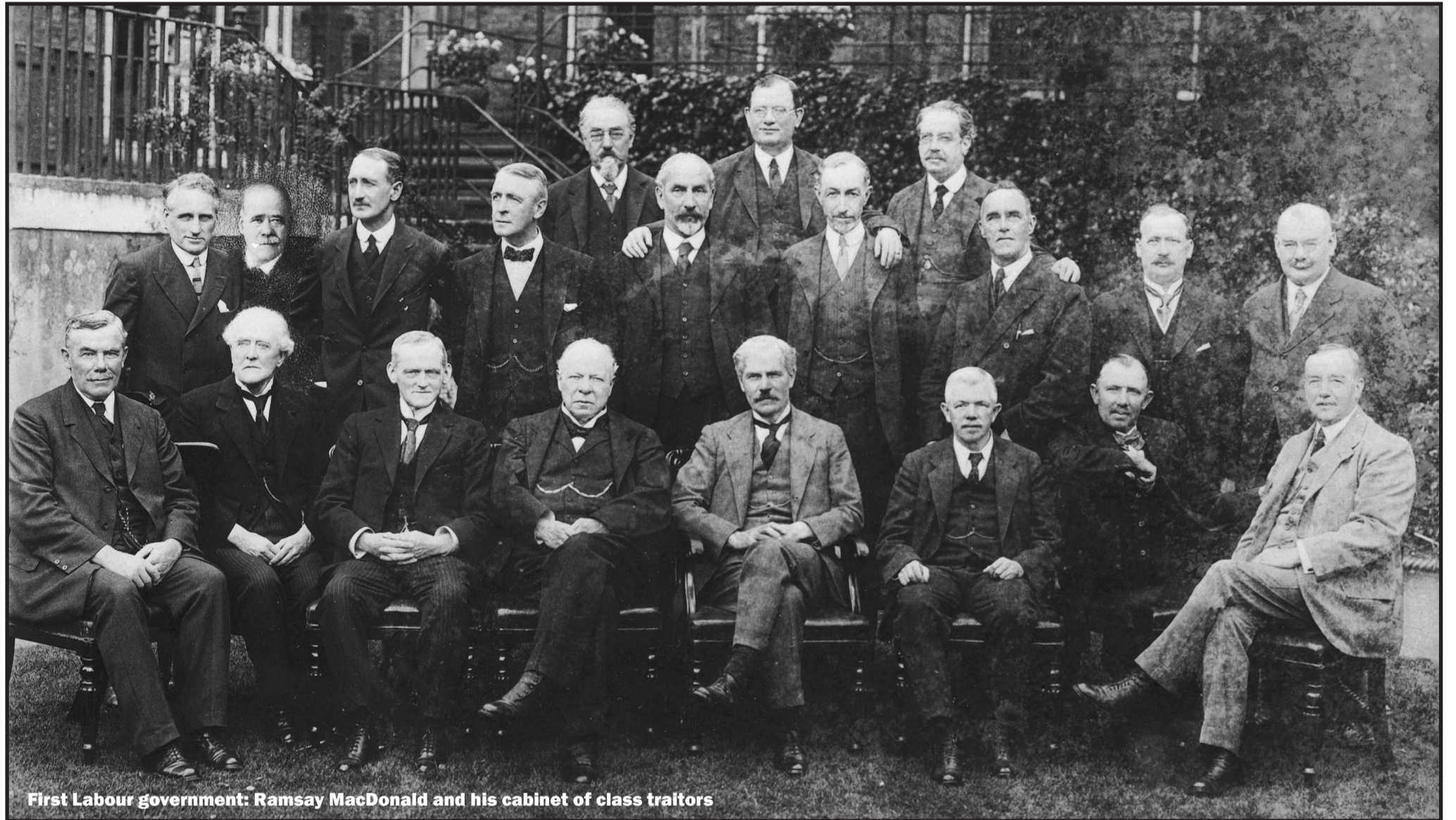
**Notes**

1. [www.rte.ie/news/politics/2026/03/17/1563792-taoiseach-us-trump](http://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2026/03/17/1563792-taoiseach-us-trump)

## OUR HISTORY

# Fridays black and red

Marking the centenary of the 1926 General Strike, **Jack Conrad** charts the transition from an aristocratic Con-Lib two-party system to the bourgeois Con-Lab two-party system. Though the first Labour government was a tame affair, it set the stage for an historic clash of class against class



First Labour government: Ramsay MacDonald and his cabinet of class traitors

April 15 1921, Black Friday, marked a terrible defeat for the working class. The Triple Alliance collapsed and the miners were left to fight alone. After a bitter, 11-week lockout, their Fed surrendered and the miners were forced into accepting swingeing pay cuts.<sup>1</sup> Other sections inevitably went down too. Trade union membership, which had reached a record 8,340,000 in 1920, nearly halved to 4,250,000 in 1923. As we concluded in the previous article in this series, a “strategic defeat”.<sup>2</sup>

Despite that, in the aftermath of Black Friday, the working class turned towards the Labour Party in an attempt to defend itself. Prime minister David Lloyd George had thrown down the working class industrially, only to see it spring up in political form. His nemesis had arrived. The general elections of 1922, 1923 and 1924 gave successive boosts to the ongoing realignment in British politics. The two-party Liberal-Tory system was mutating into a two-party Labour-Tory system via an unstable and transitional three-party Liberal-Labour-Tory system.

At the beginning of the 1850s Marx thought that the Tories - the party of great landlords, the established church, country squires, protectionism and invented tradition - would soon go extinct. After that the division in British politics would be between free trade liberalism and (Chartist) socialism.<sup>3</sup> He assumed too a quick development of revolution in Britain and mainland Europe. Faced with the unmitigated horror of oncoming working class rule, landed interests would rush for

safety into the arms of the Liberal Party, thereby making it the sole party of the propertied classes.<sup>4</sup> The idea that they, or even a good few of them, would come over to the side of the proletariat is risible.

Of course, Marx’s prediction was made at the very onset of the 1851-73 boom, a period of prosperity which yanked the rug from under the feet of physical-force Chartism and propelled skilled workers along the path of self-improving craft unionism. The aristocracy thereby continued to dominate high politics, albeit as a *hereditary caste*, rather than a class. The Liberal Party evolving from the Whigs, becoming the aristocratic party of the industrial bourgeoisie.

For the sake of the argument, it must be emphasised, even with the 1832 Reform Act the numbers of voters remained tiny. Only with the 1867 Reform Act did better-off workers get the vote. Universal *male* suffrage was achieved in 1918 (women having to wait till 1928 before they finally achieved full parity with men).

Hence, with the relative decline of the British global hegemon and the dawning of mass electoral politics, the Liberal Party’s carefully constructed rainbow coalition suffered a series of *strategic* fissures and defections. First to cleave away were the Irish. Next the trade unions. Then the capitalists. Terrified by working class militancy and the rise of the Labour Party, the captains of industry hurled themselves backwards into the arms of the old order. The Conservative Party was thereby transformed into the preferred party of bourgeois

property. The Liberals limped on as an increasingly marginalised third party and Labour emerged as the *main* party of social reform.

Those who over recent years have sagely announced the imminent demise of the Labour Party and/or the Conservative Party because of bad election night performances ought to ponder the death of the great Liberal Party.<sup>5</sup> It had little to do with the failings of this or that leader, the lack of a grand narrative, let alone poor communication skills: rather the tectonic movement of economic, national and social forces. Though today showing all the tick-box signs of advanced decay, the Tory and Labour parties remain historically constituted *class* parties. In other words, even though seemingly on their death bed, they can suddenly find a new lease of life (eg, the Corbyn membership surge, or, looking to the future, a Tory-Reform pact or merger). The passing of such parties will surely come only with radically changed objective circumstances - eg, breaking the trade union link, ending the first-past-the-post system, the forging of a mass Communist Party, etc.

### In office

Anyway, not least due to the efforts of Andrew Bonar Law, the Tories broke with David Lloyd George’s Lib-Con coalition government. His excuse was that its continuation created “an amalgamated ‘bourgeois bloc’, which leaves the socialists as the sole alternative”.<sup>6</sup> Meeting at the Carlton Club in October 1922, the Conservative Party agreed to fight independently. Though Labour won enough seats to make it the official

opposition for the first time, this was, in fact, all part of a grand manoeuvre.

Especially with the followers of HH Asquith and Lloyd George at loggerheads, the Liberal Party could, within the unstable, three-party system, now be used as a sacrificial chess piece. Bonar Law and other Tory grandees envisaged killing off the Liberals through, on the one hand, absorbing its rightwing and, on the other, encouraging, pressurising, its left wing into throwing in its lot with Labour. That would leave the Tories as the dominant party, while thoroughly diluting Labour’s already diluted ambitions. The nation would thereby be saved from socialism, albeit by actually putting Labour into office.

JCC Davidson - later the chair of the Conservative Party - argued that a continuation of the Lib-Con coalition would be a “dishonest combination”, because it would supposedly force both parties to abandon their “principles” (as if they were guided by principles, not interests). No less to the point, he warned, “to deprive Labour of their constitutional rights” is “the first step down the road of revolution”.<sup>7</sup>

So Labour’s leader, Ramsay MacDonald, was assiduously courted. He was invited to the right sort of London clubs and the right sort of country house weekend parties. So, after the 1923 general election, when the Tories, despite remaining the biggest party, lost their majority, George V invited MacDonald, not Stanley Baldwin, to the palace (he was to be given Liberal ‘confidence and supply’ support).

No surprise, MacDonald’s minority government proved

eminently worthy of the establishment’s trust. And, because it was not just a ready pupil, but a teacher’s pet, the first Labour government was treated as a “great joke for the popular press”. Ministers learned to speak posh, grabbed the fat salaries, donned top hats and tails and carried out an undeviating imperialist policy at home and abroad. Labour, in fact, did everything to prove itself ‘fit to govern’. For example, Philip Snowden’s first budget omitted the promised levy on capital, and, in the witty words of Robert Graves, “did nothing more newsworthy than provide a ‘free breakfast table’ by reducing the import duties on tea, coffee, sugar and chicory”.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the Labour government’s only notable legislative achievement, the Wheatley Housing Act, amounted to no more than a homeopathic remedy for capitalism’s rapidly mounting ills and contradictions.

Naturally, industrial action was automatically condemned. Indeed, when London tram workers struck for higher pay, the anti-trade union Emergency Powers Act was invoked. This meant that the military would be deployed. A special cabinet committee, consisting of Arthur Henderson, Sidney Webb, Josiah Wedgewood and JH Thomas, was established to oversee strikebreaking operations. Only the speedy ending of the strike, “coupled with a strong private protest from the general council of the TUC, who were said to have hinted at the possibility of a general strike if the act was enforced, smoothed the matter over”.<sup>9</sup>

The TUC and Labour Party NEC might protest against the government’s anti-working class

measures. But, in what was to become a standard response, ministers brushed all objections aside. Workers had to stop 'being greedy'. The Labour government was not for one class, but the whole nation. Strong-arm measures had to be used, because the "epidemic of labour revolts" was frighteningly reminiscent of "what was happening in Russia in 1917 against the Kerensky government".<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, cravenly, all foreign office material was referred to Baldwin for 'bi-partisan' consultations. And underlining his commitment to continuity, MacDonald agreed to give government portfolios to former Liberals - eg, Lord Chelmsford, an ex-colonial governor, and Lord Haldain, the former war minister and architect of Britain's World War I centralised war machine. He entered the 'socialist' government as chair of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Even more remarkably, Lord Chelmsford, a lifelong Tory and former viceroy of India, was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty.

Clearly then, the first Labour government was a kind of popular front. In point of fact, that description, though it is of somewhat later coinage, neatly fits the Labour Party itself. Labour being a "bourgeois workers' party": its social base lies in the organised working class, but the politics of its leadership, including the bureaucrats heading the trade unions, are thoroughly bourgeois.

Lenin, is, of course, often credited with both concept and phrase. After all he supported the Labour Party's affiliation to the Socialist (Second) International, all the while stressing its paradoxical class nature. In *'Leftwing' communism* he argued in exactly the same spirit. While the Labour Party was composed of workers, it was led by reactionaries who acted fully in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, communists should join. A line he defended at the 2nd Congress of Comintern. And, of course, in *Imperialism and the split in socialism* (1916) he repeatedly uses the phrases 'bourgeois labour movement' and 'bourgeois labour party'.<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, he freely acknowledged, both the concept and phrase originated with Engels. Most readers of this paper will be all too familiar with Engels' widely quoted letters to August Bebel (1883) and Friedrich Sorge (1891).<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, quite correctly, Comintern - under the leadership of Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev - argued that communists in Britain should help put Labour into office ... in order to *expose it* (despite that being the very same goal, though for very different reasons, tacitly pursued by the Tories and actively facilitated by George V). Indeed, it could be said that both the British establishment and Comintern wanted to support a Labour government 'like the rope supports the hanged man'. Still heresy for permanently childish leftists today.

## Resignation

The decision to recognise the Soviet Union and begin trade negotiations did ruffle anti-Bolshevik sensibilities. But it was on a different, though related, issue that the Labour government "chose to invite defeat". Ralph Miliband is right to say that, in view of his government's "meticulous observance of constitutional rules and procedures", there is a "certain irony" that MacDonald left office over his opponent's claim that it had been "guilty of grave constitutional impropriety".<sup>13</sup>

The issue was the decision not to proceed with the prosecution of JR Campbell, editor of the

CPGB's *Workers' Weekly*. After he was charged with inciting mutiny for his 'Open letter to the fighting forces' - he had exhorted soldiers and sailors to "let it be known that, neither in the class war, nor in a military war, will you turn your guns on fellow workers" - there was a storm of protest from all sections of the workers' movement.<sup>14</sup> All of a sudden, the director of public prosecutions thought better of it, supposedly because of Campbell's magnificent war record. Anyway, for whatever reason, the case was dropped.

Delivering a schoolmasterly whack over the knuckles, the Liberals and Conservatives tabled a censure motion in the House of Commons. MacDonald had been wounded in such parliamentary skirmishes before. Now, though, with Labourite reformism standing exposed and a viable alternative developing on the left in the form of the CPGB, he felt a compelling need to rally the official labour movement around him and use the communists as a scapegoat. So he treated the matter as one of confidence. He resigned. Thus ended the first Labour government.

On October 24 1924, in the closing straight of the subsequent general election campaign (polling was only five days away), the foreign office released the so-called 'Zinoviev letter'. It was published in *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*. Purportedly it revealed a dastardly Moscow plot to subvert British civilisation. Addressing the central committee of the CPGB, Gregory Zinoviev, president of the Comintern, was said to have issued instructions to bring to bear the greatest pressure to ensure ratification of trade treaties with the Soviet Union. There were also bloodcurdling references to communist cells in the army and preparations for the revolutionary seizure of power.

Incidentally, in January 1999 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, under Robin Cook, published its own heavily sanitised official account of the 'Zinoviev letter'. After an 11-month study its chief historian, Gill Bennett (with the assistance of Moscow archivists), concluded that the document was probably forged by white Russians (SIS/MI6 assets). They wanted to "derail the treaties" between Britain and the Soviet republic. MI6 assured the foreign office that the document was genuine. Securocrats were also responsible for leaking it to the Conservative Party. The Bennett study names Joseph Ball (MI5), who joined Tory central office in 1926, and Desmond Morton (MI6), a close friend of Winston Churchill's. He was appointed a personal assistant during World War II. Stewart Menzies, a future head of MI6, later admitted passing the 'Zinoviev letter' to the *Daily Mail*.<sup>15</sup>

Yet no matter how transparent a forgery it was, it did the trick. Though the Labour vote increased, the Liberal vote collapsed in a panicked, middle-class stampede to the Conservatives. The Tory vote soared by two million and gave them 152 extra MPs and, in Allan Hutt's phrase, an "oppressively swollen" majority<sup>16</sup> (an "oppressively swollen" majority, it needs stressing, obtained through naked fraud). The 1924 election was rigged. A violation of any kind of democracy. The Tory government was clearly the result of a conspiracy hatched between MI5 and MI6 securocrats, foreign office grandees and Conservative Party insiders, presumably with the full blessing of Buckingham Palace.

Of course, in terms of high politics all this is of the utmost importance. Obviously not for anarchists and various leftists. For them one election is like another and all elections are fake, a spectacle, a distraction. They

hoodwink the docile plebs and serve to produce the illusion of popular control. Meanwhile wealth and power go untouched.

Communist take a very different approach. We consider it obligatory, apart from the most exceptional circumstances, to participate in elections, no matter how unfair, no matter how bogus they are. Our overriding aim is to organise and mobilise the widest masses. And with that in mind, the results of the 1924 general election provided ample opportunity, not only to declare the Tories' "oppressively swollen majority" illegitimate, but to energetically popularise the demand for the opening of MI5/MI6 files to reveal the truth about the 'Zinoviev letter' and along with that, the rooting out of all individuals directly or indirectly responsible for what amounted to a *criminal* coup to stop the re-election of MacDonald's government.

We have in mind, of course, something like the Bolshevik slogan 'publish the secret treaties'. A demand with its beginnings in early March 1917 when Lev Kamenev and Joseph Stalin, having returned to Petrograd from their Siberian exile, took over editing *Pravda*. Kamenev's editorial 'Without secret treaties' reached out to 'honest' defencists - that is the great majority of revolutionary-minded workers, soldiers and peasants - by calling for the abrogation of the grubby tsarist diplomatic deals concluded with Anglo-French imperialism (ie, Russia would gain control over Constantinople and the Turkish straits in the event of the central powers being defeated).

However, it was Gregory Zinoviev, still in Berne, who recognised the full agitational potential of the issue after reading the telegram sent to Russian ambassadors by the provisional government's foreign minister, Paul Miliukov. Zinoviev knew that the *narod* would be outraged by the idea that the war was being fought, not to defend the country against German and Austrian aggression, but to expand Russia's imperial reach. By the end of March 1917 'publish the secret treaties' featured at the centre of the Bolshevik's agitational campaign against the provisional government and the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary 'agreementist' parties. It was, says Lars T Lih, the sister slogan of 'All power to the soviets'.<sup>17</sup>

## Stage-setting

In any case, with the 1924 Conservative landslide and, in April 1925, a return to the gold standard, the stage was set for a set-piece confrontation between the working class and capital - a confrontation which again found the miners in the front line. For long the sick man of British capitalism, the coal industry was in a particularly bad state. In pursuit of an elusive profit margin, on June 30 1925 the mine owners issued a demand for the repeal of the seven-hour day and a return to eight hours. Also they proposed drastic wage reductions and the abolition of the principle of the minimum wage. The miners refused to surrender their hard-won gains and appealed to the TUC.

Surprisingly, a special meeting of the general council on July 10 1925 pledged its "complete support" for the miners, and "undertook to cooperate wholeheartedly with them in their resistance to the degradation of the standard of life of their members".<sup>18</sup> This implicit threat of a general strike was the cause of much celebration amongst militant workers ... and it sent shivers throughout the ruling class establishment.

Why this sudden determination by the TUC to stand firm against the government? Some have suggested it was due to changed composition.

JH Thomas, the railworkers' general secretary, had stood down from the general council to become a Labour minister. He and other inveterate rightwingers had been replaced by left reformists such as Alonzo Swales, George Hicks and Alf Purcell.

However, as John Foster says, the "key factor" was "pressure from below", spurred on by the erosion of wages, rising unemployment and an improved bargaining position for British workers because of the French occupation of the Ruhr.<sup>19</sup> This pressure from below was given organisational form and a political cutting edge by the National Minority Movement, launched in August 1924 by the CPGB and its allies.<sup>20</sup>

In that sense it was the CPGB which was responsible for the TUC discovering a backbone. If the TUC did not take the lead, its leaders were well aware that the CPGB wanted to do just that. Without the TUC, Ernest Bevin said he feared "unofficial fighting in all parts of the country" and "anarchy".<sup>21</sup> Ramsay MacDonald admitted that he too was haunted by similar visions: "Had no general strike been declared, industry would have been almost as much paralysed by unauthorised strikes."<sup>22</sup>

As it turned out, the government was not yet ready. Faced with the miners' intransigence and TUC willingness to threaten a general strike, Baldwin's government decided to undertake a swift tactical retreat. On July 31 1925 - Red Friday - it announced a royal commission of inquiry into the coal industry and agreed to subsidise the mine owners for nine months, after which the commission was to deliver its report.

Baldwin was, as a result, subjected to a relentless whispering campaign conducted by FE Smith (Lord Birkenhead) and Winston Churchill - aided and abetted by the Rothermere press. They wanted to get Lloyd George on board, with a view to reviving the anti-socialist 'bourgeois bloc'.<sup>23</sup> Churchill, now the chancellor, declared that the concessions granted to the miners were the "worst of all options". The government had been humiliated. The gold standard was thrown into jeopardy. Churchill became the leading advocate of preparing to defeat the general strike when it came.

In that same anti-socialist spirit, the die-hard Tory, Lord Salisbury, submitted a long cabinet memorandum:

The precedent we are setting leads straight to nationalisation. I need not say that, to a government pledged as we are, this conclusion is absolutely unacceptable ... Is there any ground on which, in our retreat, we could hope to make a stand; and if there be such ground, which I do not perceive, have we the strength to hold?

For good reason or bad we retreated because we did not venture to fight. We have not only thought it right to give way to force, but we have condoned the breaking of their contracts by the allied unions, and we have actually agreed to pay a large sum for the arrangement. Whatever our ultimate intentions, there is no doubt that this is how the trade unions themselves and the world regard that event. Who will believe us, after the experience of the last few days, when we say we will die in some ill-defined ditch rather than accept the nationalisation of the coal industry, the nationalisation of every other distressed industry ... the moral basis of the government seems to me to have dropped out.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, the government had to robustly re-establish its right to govern the governed ●

## Notes

1. Nowadays there are sections of the left - the Socialist Party in England and Wales in particular comes to mind - which have made the 'no cuts' slogan into a kind of shibboleth. Nothing could be more stupid. Sometimes the balance of class forces simply means that, apart from those determined on suicide, we have to accept cuts to wages, meal breaks ... or council budgets, simply because we have no choice in the matter. There is no principle that communists must never retreat. Indeed we must learn how to retreat, as we must learn how to attack.
2. J Conrad 'Black Friday betrayal' *Weekly Worker* March 19 2026 (www.weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1577/black-friday-betrayal).
3. See K Marx and F Engels *CW* London 1979, pp327-32.
4. It should be emphasised that both the Tories and Whigs were aristocratically led. It is just that the Whigs/Liberals - championed the economic interests of the *industrial* bourgeoisie for their own sectional advantage. They wanted government office - not least because of the enormous scope that there was in making a financial killing through corruption. Another important point: long before the 1850s, the basis of aristocratic wealth had ceased being feudal and become capitalist. In *Capital* Marx distinguished between industry and agriculture, but declared that "in the 'categoric' sense the farmer is an industrial capitalist as much as the manufacturer" (K Marx *Capital* Moscow 1970, p750n).
5. For the Tories: J Ross *Thatcher and friends: the anatomy of the Tory Party* London 1983; G Wheatcroft *The strange death of Tory England* London 1998; P Burton-Cartledge *The party's over: the rise and fall of the Conservatives from Thatcher to Sunak* London 2021 and 2023; M Field *The end of an era: the decline and fall of the Tory Party* London 2025. For Labour: E Hobsbawm (et al) *The forward march of Labour halted?* London 1981; D Kavanagh (ed) *The politics of the Labour Party* London 1981.
6. J Barns and K Middlemas *Baldwin: a biography* London 1969, p252.
7. RR Jones *Memoirs of a Conservative: JCC Davidson's memories and papers, 1910-37* London 1969, p253.
8. R Graves and A Hodge *The long weekend* London 1991, pp153-54.
9. A Hutt *The post-war history of the British working class* London 1937, p85.
10. Arthur Henderson as reported by Sidney Webb in M Cole (ed) *Beatrice Webb's diaries: 1924-1932* London 1952, p18.
11. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 23, Moscow 1977, pp105-20.
12. K Marx and F Engels *CW* Vol 47, New York NY, pp52-55; and *CW* Vol 49, New York NY 2001, p238.
13. R Miliband *Parliamentary socialism* London 1973, p115.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *The Guardian* February 3 1999.
16. A Hutt *The post-war history of the British working class* London 1937, p98.
17. See Lars T Lih 'Biography of a sister slogan' *Weekly Worker* April 5 2018.
18. A Hutt *The post-war history of the British working class* London 1937, p109.
19. J Foster 'Imperialism and the labour aristocracy' in J Skelley (ed) *The general strike: 1926*, London 1976, p42.
20. The Minority Movement was led from the beginning by communists - Harry Pollitt was its most famous leader. The NMM proved to be an imaginative and in many ways brilliant application of the united front tactic advocated by the 4th Congress of Comintern (see J Riddell *Towards the united front: proceedings of the fourth congress of the Communist International - 1922* Chicago IL 2012). Organising the militant minority in the trade unions, its object was to bypass the petty sectionalist prejudices of the trade union bureaucracy and hasten the day when capitalism could be overthrown. Though having affiliations from sections of the official trade union structure, the Minority Movement was in essence an anti-trade union-bureaucracy movement. Organised along industrial lines, there were, for example, miners, metal workers and transport minority movements. Each in its own way was seen as a precursor to a powerful single union in its industry. However, especially viewed in hindsight, that was not its true significance. Initially the NMM counted some 200,000 affiliated members. At its peak 957,000. Given that the CPGB had no more than 5,000 members at the time, a considerable achievement. However, these figures also show that the CPGB had an immediate constituency of well over a million (if we take into account non-union members, housewives, the unemployed, etc). Strategically the task was to merge with this mass and thereby become a party on the scale of Germany, France and Russia. If this had been done working class state power would have been within reach.
21. Quoted in A Hutt *The post-war history of the British working class* London 1937, p134.
22. R MacDonald *Socialist Review* June 1926.
23. winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1915-1929-nadir-and-recovery/present-dangers-of-the-socialist-movement.
24. Quoted in J Foster 'Imperialism and the labour aristocracy' in J Skelley (ed) *The general strike: 1926* London 1976, pp41-42.

# Assessments and perspectives

After a raft of amendments, unanimously agreed at the March 22 AGM of CPGB members

**1.** Besides everyday certainties such as further pandemics, economic downturns and yet further jolting rounds of living labour being replaced by dead labour (eg, artificial intelligence), it is altogether clear nowadays that civilisation - even the continued existence of humanity itself - is at risk.

2. The immediate danger comes from one or another local conflict - Ukraine, Iran, Taiwan, Israel-Palestine, Venezuela, Cuba - spiralling into a global war and ending in a generalised nuclear exchange. If we somehow manage to avoid that danger, there is global warming and the real prospect of a hothouse earth.

3. The warmest year on record was 2024: 1.6°C above pre-industrial levels. Last year, 2025, was either the second or third warmest year. They followed a decade of warmest years. There is now no hope whatsoever of keeping to the Paris 1.5°C limit. The danger is of a 2°C, a 2.5°C, a 3°C, or even a 4°C temperature rise during the 21st century. That means melting ice caps, devastating rises in sea levels, the inundation of many big cities, extreme fires and the degrading of existing agricultural land and wildlife habitats.

4. Market forces are not the solution - that is to state the obvious. Indeed, with the climate crisis, capitalism approaches its absolute limits. Actuaries warn of a 50% loss of GDP between 2070-90 due to the climate crisis. We seek to give the climate crisis movement a clear, strategic perspective. Demonstrations, petitions, road sit-downs, sabotage, stunts, media stardom - none of that can bring about the fundamental system change that is required. Hence, the dominant mood at the moment seems to be one of resignation, brought about by the failure of protest politics. Stiff prison sentences and draconian legislation have served to cow.

5. Given the all too apparent failure of protest politics, the fraught birth of Jeremy Corbyn's Your Party and February's by-election in Gorton and Denton, many tens of thousands have flocked to join the Green Party. The twofold expectation being that: (1) Zack Polanski will shift the party further to the left - even, perhaps, give it an eco-socialist rebrand; (2) a future Green government, or a Green-dominated coalition, will push through a Green New Deal. However, if that happened, it would, in reality, still be within the narrow confines of capitalism and, the nearer the Greens get to government, the more 'no strings' donations from the mega-rich there will be. As in Germany, the Greens will be bought, bribed and tamed by the capitalist class. Meanwhile, programmatically, the Green Party remains a petty bourgeois political formation.

6. Regular articles in the *Weekly Worker* and our pamphlet *The little red climate book* have provided a clear Marxist approach. We have warned about the danger of elitist terrorist actions or even some sort of climate socialism - imposed by, or agreed in close collaboration with, the capitalist state. Something which is, at the moment, a mere theoretical possibility. What is noticeable at this particular juncture is the refusal, the inability, of mainstream politicians, and therefore the capitalist class, to do anything remotely serious about the climate crisis. They remain in thrall to 'production for the sake of production'. In point of fact, there is a growing body of opinion which either



**Climate catastrophe 2005: New Orleans underwater in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina**

dismisses the climate crisis as a con - that, or nothing needs to be done apart from incremental, business-as-usual adaptation.

7. Socialism and the transition to communism offer the only rational solution. Despite that, nowhere is the working class remotely in a position to take power. Because of a string of political and economic defeats, because of the left's systematic failure to learn from the past, because of a now cemented bourgeois triumphalism over the collapse of bureaucratic socialism in the USSR and eastern Europe, class consciousness - that is, the class consciousness of the working class - is at an extraordinarily low ebb.

8. Overall, politics continues to move to the right. The evidence, sadly, is all too abundant: (1) a left that clings to liberalism and commits itself to cross-class popular frontism; a left that cannot rise above strikes and streets economism; a left that tails the Greens; a left that easily flips to the right over issues such as Brexit, Ukraine and trans rights; a left that happily tolerates social imperialism; a left that is mired in localism, self-indulgent talking shops and amorphous 'organisations' which require little or no actual discipline or commitment; (2) the rise of parties such as National Rally, AfD, Austria's FPÖ, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the Party of Freedom in the Netherlands and Reform UK, and their very real governmental aspirations; (3) governments in India, Russia, Japan, Argentina, Ukraine, Iran, Turkey, the Philippines, Italy, Israel and Hungary.

9. Most importantly, of course, there is the US and Trump 2.0. Donald Trump should not be dismissed as either stupid

or ignorant. He is a right populist with an almost instinctive understanding of his base. Nor should Trump, Maga and ICE be equated with fascism. Fascism is first and foremost about smashing the organised working class and negatively resolving a revolutionary situation. To state the obvious, there is no revolutionary situation in the US and the organised working class poses no threat to the capitalist class.

10. Nonetheless, with the Supreme Court striking down his 'Freedom day' tariffs and November's midterm elections threatening the GOP's majority in Congress, we should take seriously the possibility of Trump resorting to non-constitutional means. Remember, on January 6 2021, he mobilised a mob, including fascist forces such as the Proud Boys and various other boogaloes, in an attempted self-coup. It was never going to succeed. We cannot say the same in 2026.

11. Those on the left who look for salvation to the Democrats - a straightforward capitalist party - betray the elementary interests of the working class and the cause of socialism. Lesser evilism is not a Marxist strategy. Nor should we look to 'progressives' such as AOC. There has to be a break with the Democrats. When, and over what, is a matter of tactics.

12. Obviously, Trump 2.0 has had a global impact. Leaving aside the Panama Canal, Canada and Greenland, the threat of swingeing tariffs saw climbdowns across the board. The only exception being China - a fact of enormous significance. America is dramatically upping the tribute it exacts from the rest of the world, not

least Europe. Far-right governments in France, Germany, the UK, etc would make not a jot of difference here. On the contrary, they would act as US agents, outposts and satraps. That is why pro-Trump actors, state and non-state, are actively promoting far-right parties, projects and formations in Europe.

13. Capitalism has failed to unify Europe. We should not, however, discount the possibility of a far-right unification of Europe: eg, by a Bonapartist regime in Germany or France. However, any such unification, almost by definition, cannot be carried out peacefully and democratically. It would require blood and iron.

14. Confirming the general shift to the right, we note the reversal of the 'pink tide' in Latin America and the Donroe Doctrine. Left governments in Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Peru and Bolivia have all been voted out of office. The US tolerates Brazil, Mexico and Colombia - for the moment - but has made an example of Venezuela and Cuba. Kidnap, oil embargo, crippling sanctions, a mass population exodus: it is siege warfare. Investing hopes in the Cuban and Venezuelan regimes was always hopelessly mistaken. Naturally, though, we demand the end of sanctions, threats and illegitimate trials.

15. While Trump talks about bringing peace to Gaza, his solution amounts to a new form of colonialism, which, in the end, can only serve Israel. Israel being the attack dog of the United States in the Middle East. The reconstruction of Gaza, if it happens, will amount to another nakba. The West Bank is already *de*

*facto* annexed. Remarkably, the pro-Palestine movement has continued almost unabated.

16. Israel has fought regional wars too: Lebanon, Syria and now, once again alongside the US, Iran. Within Iran we argue for a position of revolutionary defensism. This means demands such as a system of rationing to meet immediate needs, the provision of air raid shelters, taking over empty apartments to house the homeless, ending the control exercised by the IRGC and religious foundations over key sectors of the economy, the separation of the mosque from all aspects of the state, freedom to organise, to speak and assemble, the dissolving of the IRGC and the Basiji and the arming of the people. That helps create the conditions needed for the overthrow of the theocratic regime and the formation of a provisional revolutionary government, which organises for national defence and, as soon as possible, free and fair elections to a constituent assembly.

17. We oppose US-Israeli attacks, imperialist sanctions and the extraordinary dangers represented by US plans for regime change from above. Along with Hopi, we stand for regime change from below. Note the considerable audience for our ideas in Iran and the Iranian diaspora.

18. While the CPGB rightly recognises the reactionary nature of Hamas, we have correctly supported the BDS campaign, opposed the erosion of civil liberties and highlighted the settler-colonial political economy that lies behind ethnic cleansing and the danger of genocide. We emphatically reject the idea of putting an equals sign between Hamas and the Zionist state and calling for defeatism on both sides. If we had forces on the ground in Palestine, we would definitely be part of the resistance. Above all, though, we have provided a clear strategic perspective. We uphold an immediate programme of equal national rights within Israel, oppose Zionist colonisation of the West Bank and Gaza and yet recognise that the only genuine, the only viable solution comes from the working class taking the lead in bringing about Arab national unification that also fights for the voluntary affiliation/merger of the Jewish/Hebrew nation with an Arab Socialist Republic. Calls for a one-state or a two-state solution within Mandate Palestine are illusory.

19. It is vital not to be naive about Ukraine. It is highly unlikely that peace is just about to break out. Trump's offer to Russia that it keeps what it has gained after four years of bloody war has been widely condemned by liberal opinion as analogous to Czechoslovakia 1938. Of course, Russia is in no way equivalent to Nazi Germany. Apart from its nuclear arsenal, it is decidedly a second-rate power. Why then doesn't Putin and the FSB regime in Moscow grab at Trump's peace offer? Nato troops stationed along Russia's southern border and US security guarantees for Ukraine provide the obvious explanation. Note, Trump has threatened to unleash all hell against Russia if he does not get a satisfactory deal. The risk of shifting from a proxy war to Nato direct involvement and even escalating to the point of an exchange of nuclear weapons is all too real.

20. Nor does Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the Kyiv regime really want Trump's deal. It plays along, but knows that it faces stiff internal opposition - even potential revolt - in the event of Trump's deal becoming a

reality: eg, by the Banderites and the army's Azov units.

21. We have rightly placed great emphasis on Ukraine. From the beginning of the 'special military operation', we have consistently upheld revolutionary defeatism. This applies not only to our 'own' side - ie, the Zelensky regime in Kyiv - but Russia too. Though Russia is, of course, in no way an imperialist power: eg, the capitalist extraction of surplus value from abroad plays only a marginal role in its economy. No, the Putin FSB regime seeks to build a neo-tsarist empire and join the imperialist club. Needless to say, the Putin FSB regime is anti-working class, authoritarian and thoroughly reactionary. No communist should have the slightest illusion that Russia's murderous war in Ukraine is in any way progressive.

22. Within Britain, we have also correctly denounced the outright treachery of social imperialism, the illusions peddled by social pacifism and the particular dangers of centrist conciliationism. Revolutionary defeatism is more than a moral stance. It is not a call for merely upping the politics of protest: no, it is a call for the politics of power - ie, replacing the rule of capital with the rule of the working class.

23. The Ukraine war and Russia's "no limits" partnership with China must be put into the global context. The US has only one serious rival, and that is China: the world's second-largest economy and a proto- or even fully imperialist power. The EU is hopelessly divided and militarily weak. Russia has actually proved itself militarily weak too with the Ukraine quagmire. Japan is held in military subordination and the UK is little more than a useful minion. China alone is a full-spectrum challenger - economic, military, diplomatic, technological and ideological. Hence the well-financed propaganda over freedom of navigation opportunities (FONOPs) in the South China Sea, Taiwan, Tibet, human rights, Hong Kong democracy and the so-called Uyghur genocide - all carefully crafted to cover for the push to surround, strangle and subordinate China. The left must

adopt a clear defeatist line in relation to the bellicose policy being pursued by the US and its allies, without in any way prettifying the Beijing regime.

24. The US is without doubt in relative decline, but we would be foolish in the extreme to declare that American hegemony is over and done for. Firstly, the dollar remains the global reserve currency. Secondly, the US possesses unequalled economic, military, technological, diplomatic and ideological power. Thirdly, there is the US-dominated system of alliances: Nato, the Five Eyes, the Quad and Aukus.

25. While it is clear that China will not be a viable alternative hegemon any time soon, over the last three decades the country has seen massive, historically unprecedented, economic growth, especially since 2001 and WTO membership. Modern China's revolutionary origins, state-controlled capitalist development, successful integration into the world market and Mao-Deng-Xi 'official communism' have made it into a model for some. 'Official communist' parties have started to take their lead from China: eg, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. In the UK too there is the *Morning Star's* CPB and former Trotskyite sects such as Socialist Action. Surely there will be many more leftwing Sinophiles. As should be all too obvious, the working class does not rule in China. Marxists - ie, genuine communists - need to develop a concrete analysis of China in all its contradictory complexity, not content themselves with either bestowing trite labels or echoing the nonsense of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'.

26. Sir Keir Starmer presides over the most rightwing Labour government ever. The only thing positively recommending Labour in the July 2024 general election was that they were not the Tories. Hardly inspiring. The correct approach was: 'Vote left where you can, vote Labour where you must' - a slogan which posed the necessity of breaking with auto-Labourism, but recognised that Labour remains a bourgeois workers' party.

27. The Labour Party won a

parliamentary landslide; however, this was the result of the peculiarities of the 'first past the post' system. Labour secured 411 MPs with just 33.7% of the vote. If the Tory and Reform vote was combined, it would have given them a clear victory. We note the continued talk of some sort of Tory-Reform electoral pact. There is, moreover, the election of Kemi Badenoch as Tory leader - another step to the right. Historically, of course, the Tories are a party of the far right.

28. Labour has, of course, since slumped in the opinion polls, but instead of, as was once normal, the main opposition party taking a commanding lead, it is Reform which has done that. Nonetheless, predictions about Nigel Farage being the next prime minister are, to put it mildly, wildly premature.

29. The Labour left has, for the moment, been completely marginalised. In part, this is due to the power of the Labour right and the historically established connections it has with the state, the ruling class and the US hegemon. In part, however, it is due to the self-inflicted political failure of the Labour left in general and the Corbyn movement in particular. The anti-democratic coup in Momentum and actually joining in with the 'anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism' big lie proved decisive. We should expect the revival of the Labour left in one form or another. That could come from left-led trade unions and/or from ambitious career politicians posing left. Then there is the possibility of transforming the Labour Party into a united front of a special kind - an idea that we should not give up on, no matter how dim that prospect appears at the moment.

30. Showing that there is a deep social well of leftwing discontent, not only did five pro-Palestine MPs get elected in July 2024: after much dithering and delay, Jeremy Corbyn was effectively pushed into launching what is now called Your Party. Initially, over 800,000 expressed an interest. However, because of the schism between Corbyn's HQ and Zarah Sultana, because of the control-freakery, because of the red-baiting, that number has massively shrunk. Many went to the Green Party, especially after the election of Zack Polanski. Despite that, Your Party remains a site of struggle.

31. Once, great hopes were placed in so-called parties of recomposition. In practice, as we consistently argued, they have proved to be merely reformist and easily slotted into the politics of bourgeois coalitionism: Syriza, Podemos, the Workers Party of Brazil, Communist Refoundation, Die Linke. That, or they proved to be dead ends: the New Anticapitalist Party, Respect, Left Unity, the Scottish Socialist Party, etc. Despite that sorry record, Jeremy Corbyn's The Many faction and its plans for Your Party promise little more than a repeat of what is a hopelessly failed model. Not that Grassroots Left should be considered anything more than a temporary arrangement. Most of its components are committed to popular frontism: eg, with the Green Party.

32. Our organisation remains pitifully small and we should not expect any dramatic change in the immediate term. We live in an extended period of reaction. Blame culture, demoralisation, attempts to conciliate those to our right. All are manifest dangers - we need to be brutally honest about that. There are no easy answers. We are under a 'state of siege' and, therefore, it is essential to undeviatingly defend our culture of robust open polemic, our programme and our political ideas.

33. That the fusion talks between the CPGB, Talking About Socialism and the *Prometheus* editorial board got nowhere is of little surprise. Opportunists naturally recoil from unity around firm principle

- unity around a clear communist programme, unity where minorities accept their minority position. Not that we should dismiss the future prospects of communist rapprochement. On the contrary, that remains a key task.

34. Communist University has long been a highlight of our year. In-person attendance is far too low and that dampens discussion and debate. We should once again seek the active involvement of overseas comrades in 2026 and build on the cultural programme introduced last year.

35. While a proto-Communist Party might well be built through recruiting the ones, the twos ... even the hundreds, our strategic expectation is that the initial breakthrough will come through a series of splits in the existing left groups - including those inside the Labour Party - and, from that, fusions. In terms of going through the existing left, there are good reasons for optimism. What the *Weekly Worker* says matters.

36. Whatever various leaderships say, the existing left is either stagnant or shrinking - something that applies more or less across the board. Claims of soaraway success for this or that group invariably prove to be fleeting or chimeric. No less to the point, there has been a general decline in the culture of the left. Entirely secondary questions are elevated to prime importance, class politics downgraded to the level of narrow trade unionism and a commitment to elementary principles is too often replaced by abject tailism. That, or dead-headed dogmatism rules. Hence, everywhere there is the miseducation of new recruits.

37. As a general approach, we are against comrades in existing left groups simply resigning. That is, unfortunately, an all too common occurrence. Instead, we say: 'Stay, organise and openly fight'. This way, lessons can be learnt for the entire left and comrades can develop themselves.

38. Given its 'slow burn' success, we really need a second, updated edition of Mike Macnair's 2008 *Revolutionary strategy*. It has already been translated into a number of languages by sympathetic comrades. Putting together and editing his articles on imperialism, identity politics and partyism would be more than a good idea too. In terms of our publication list, we will add Jack Conrad's *USSR: a Marxist post-mortem*. Book 1 has been completed and is being proofread prior to publication. It is subtitled: *Internal contradictions*. Three other books are envisaged: book 2, *The production and reproduction of social relations*; book 3, *International relations*; book 4, *Theories of bureaucratic socialism*. We should explore recording audio versions of these and our other publications.

39. The PCC, working with appropriate cells, will explore the creation of supporters networks and reading circles to extend the influence of our ideas and look for ways to recruit and give sympathetic *Weekly Worker* readers an opportunity to be actively involved in developing our work organisationally.

40. To maintain and boost our healthy financial situation, we commit to a Summer Offensive target of £25,000 ●

# What we fight for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# weekly worker

People are  
organising  
mutual aid

## Destruction and instability

Is Iran winning the war? Is mere survival victory? **Yassamine Mather** examines the structural changes taking place which have largely sidelined the position of supreme leader and brought the IRGC very much to the fore

After just over a month of Operation Epic Fury, Donald Trump has claimed that his “core strategic objectives are nearing completion” and vows to “finish the job” within the next few weeks.

Trump’s latest statement is yet another shift in position, as he now seems to be saying that a formal diplomatic agreement is no longer a prerequisite for an end to the war. Instead, things are contingent on the destruction of Tehran’s missile capacity and its nuclear infrastructure, regardless of whether a deal is signed.

Meanwhile Trump claims, of course, that the “new regime” of Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian is a good, much improved, negotiating partner, and has requested a ceasefire. Iran officially denies anything of the kind. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are offers and counter-offers.

Indeed the latest round of diplomacy comes via third-party interlocutors, namely China and Pakistan, and their call for an immediate ceasefire, the protection of critical infrastructure and the urgent reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Beijing’s intervention reflects its growing role as a global mediator, driven largely by the need to secure its vital energy supply lines and protect extensive infrastructure investments in the region - currently threatened by the conflict. However, the diplomacy remains of a particular kind: indirect, deniable and structurally constrained.

Pakistan’s role as a mediator in the Iran war was unexpected for many. But perhaps this was not so far-fetched. Field marshal Asim Munir, the commander of Pakistan’s army, has caught Trump’s attention. Trump has repeatedly referred to him as his “favourite field marshal” and has previously stated that Munir knows Iran “better than most”.

Pakistan is heavily dependent on oil imports, a large portion of which are supplied through the Strait of Hormuz. In early March, the Pakistan government raised gasoline and diesel prices by about 20% and implemented measures to save fuel, including introducing a four-day week for government employees. So it has a real interest in bringing hostilities to a swift end. Diplomatically, Pakistan provides a channel through which proposals can be transmitted and responses signalled without formal negotiation. For Iran, direct negotiations risk undermining its domestic legitimacy. For the US, formal engagement risks appearing as a concession.

It is possible that Trump’s current position and Sino-Pakistani diplomatic initiatives mark a turning point. However, all this could change very quickly. With the Strait of Hormuz effectively blocked and global energy markets in turmoil, the pressure has become intense, so we might see an escalation rather than an agreement.

Over the past few weeks, much commentary had centred on Israel’s apparent expectation that the death of supreme leader Ali Khamenei would precipitate regime collapse. A system organised around a central figure,



Strait of Hormuz: shipping highly vulnerable

it was assumed, would fragment under the combined pressure of war, sanctions and internal dissent. All this was clearly based on false assumptions about the many structural layers of the Islamic regime. What has emerged so far is not collapse, but reconfiguration. Iran has undergone a rapid transition into what might be described as a system of ‘managed continuity’: more militarised, more opaque and in certain respects more resilient than before. This is not resilience in the sense of stability, but in the narrower sense of survivability under conditions of serious crisis.

### Reorganisation

To understand this transformation we need to consider four interlinked dynamics: the reorganisation of political authority; the material impact of the war on infrastructure and the economy; the asymmetrical pattern of destruction between Iran and Israel; and the contradictory and confusing reports of diplomatic manoeuvres alongside continued escalation.

Formally, Mojtaba Khamenei has been given the position of supreme leader. Substantively, however, his role appears limited. He lacks the political authority, ideological weight and historical presence that underpinned his father’s later years. His complete absence from public life - apart from the occasional written message - reinforces the perception that he functions less as a decisive actor than as a constitutional placeholder. This produces a gap between formal authority and effective power. The Iranian state was never, in fact, organised around a singular centre. However, authority has now been dispersed much wider across a set of overlapping institutions.

This diffusion is not accidental. It reflects the necessary response to prolonged external pressure. A system that cannot easily be decapitated is, in a narrow strategic sense, more durable. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has been repeatedly

mentioned, and quite rightly too. It has long been a powerful institution within the Iranian state; what is new is the degree to which it now constitutes the state’s leading element. The IRGC’s influence extends across parliament, the judiciary, regional administration and key sectors of the economy. Its commanders are embedded within formal institutions, while its economic networks provide an independent material base. So what we are witnessing is less a takeover than a formalisation of an already existing reality.

The logic underpinning this structure is based in what is often described as the ‘mosaic system’: a decentralised arrangement in which every position has a designated replacement. Authority is distributed, redundancy is built in, and the removal of any individual - including through aerial assassination - does not interrupt the functioning of the whole. In this sense, the Iranian state is not dependent, for continuity, on any single leader.

The shift toward an overtly military system is most visible in the organisation of strategic command. Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters functions as the effective war room for both the IRGC and the other wings of the armed forces, coordinating military operations, defences and retaliation. This marks a broader transformation in the relationship between political authority and military power. The clerical establishment remains formally dominant, but strategic decision-making is increasingly concentrated within military structures. The result is a hybrid formation: neither purely theocratic nor conventionally militarised, but a fusion of both.

Figures such as parliamentary speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf illustrate this shift. With a career that covers roles in the IRGC, the police and municipal leadership, he operates as a mediator between bureaucratic

and security institutions. The elected government of Massoud Pezeshkian and his cabinet retain responsibility for administration - public services, economic management, domestic infrastructure. However, it does look as if they are largely excluded from military decision-making.

### Chosen targets

The country’s infrastructure is being destroyed in a systematic manner. US and Israeli air strikes have targeted key components: missile production complexes, such as Khojir and Parchin; aerospace and defence facilities; energy installations; and major industrial sites, including a number of steel plants and cement production centres in regions such as Khuzestan and Isfahan. Science and engineering faculties in universities are clearly targeted and bombed. Medical and health institutions, hospitals and pharmaceutical factories lie in ruins.

These are not symbolic targets. They form part of the material basis of the Iranian state’s economic and military capacity. Their destruction has immediate effects - disrupting production, supply chains and logistics - but also long-term consequences: degrading the infrastructure required for sustained industrial reproduction. The war is therefore not only destructive, but transformative. It reshapes the conditions under which the Iranian state can reproduce itself economically and militarily.

The effects of this destruction extend into civilian life. Healthcare infrastructure has been damaged, with hospitals, emergency services and medical facilities nearing a breakdown point: there is rising demand alongside declining capacity.

At the same time, there are visible forms of social resilience. Reports of local organising, volunteer networks and mutual aid initiatives suggest that everyday forms of solidarity have arisen to meet the challenge of war. Yet this resilience coexists with

repression. Security forces maintain a pervasive presence, limiting the capacity for organised opposition, including, of course, the working class and students, but also the bazaaris (once staunch supporters of the regime).

The global dimension of the conflict is most clearly expressed in the transformation of the Strait of Hormuz. Once one of the world’s busiest maritime corridors, it has effectively become a choke point. Traffic has fallen sharply. Passage is no longer routine: it requires explicit or implicit permission by Iranian authorities. Ships are delayed, rerouted or stranded, producing disruptions that extend far beyond the region. Of course, none of this should come as a surprise. Tehran had warned it would take such steps if it was attacked by the US and Israel. Iran’s geographical position is significant here. Its control over a long stretch of coastline along a narrow maritime passage gives it disproportionate leverage over global trade flows. This is not just a strategic advantage, but an economic one, allowing Iran to exert influence through disruption rather than direct confrontation.

The economic implications are often framed in terms of oil. Yet the effects are broader. Fertilisers, chemicals, helium and other industrial inputs are already in short supply. Agriculture, healthcare and manufacturing will all be affected.

What about Iran’s retaliatory strikes against Israel? In the absence of confirmed reporting, it is impossible to assess the extent and effect of the damage. However, the pattern of destruction between what is happening in Iran and what is happening in Israel differs markedly. Missiles have hit urban areas, causing casualties, damage to buildings and disruption to everyday life. These effects are visible, immediate and politically important. However, Israel’s advanced air defence systems and extensive civil defence infrastructure limit the consequences. The impact, while significant, remains, as far as I can tell, largely localised.

Taking all this into account, we should not mistake Iran’s survival as a victory. Remaining in power and managing to inflict serious damage on the enemy is good publicity for the regime, but it has its definite limits: while Iran has not collapsed, it has transformed into a state based on a system organised around survival. The system is resilient in the sense that it can absorb shocks, but this comes at a cost: deepening militarisation, increasing economic hardship for the masses and long-term structural tension.

Of course, the regime and its system may endure all of this. However, the question is not whether it will collapse in the immediate term, but what forms of instability it will generate over time. What we are witnessing is not a stable equilibrium, but a provisional arrangement: a state that survives, but does so by reorganising itself around the possibility of permanent war ●