



weekly **worker**



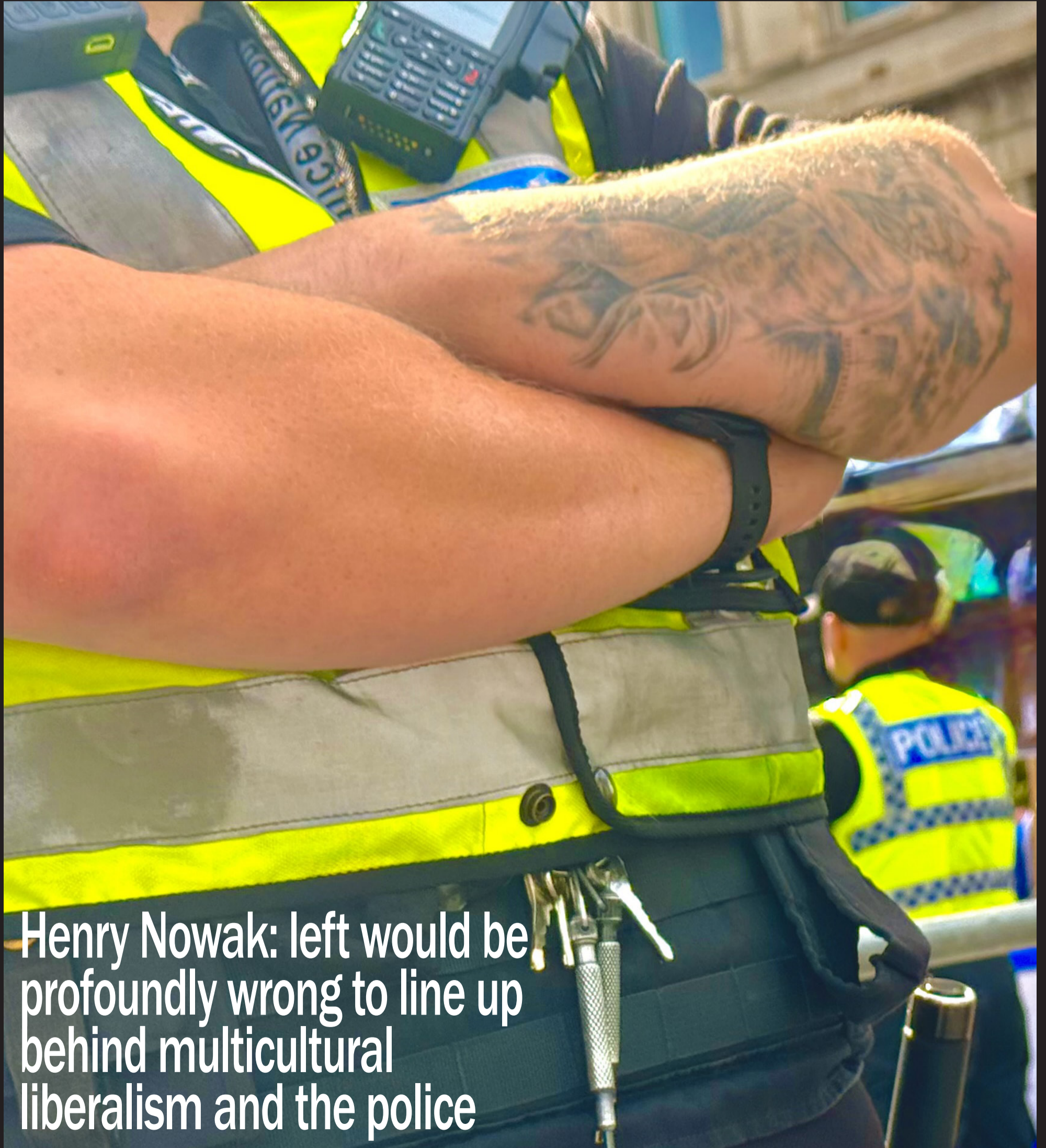
America is in charge. A quarter of countries taking part in World Cup face ticket cancellations, visa rejections and debilitating restrictions

- Letters and debate
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Towards a mass Communist Party

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Henry Nowak: left would be profoundly wrong to line up behind multicultural liberalism and the police

LETTERS



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

Ouija politics

Contrary to Ian Spencer's letter in last week's *Weekly Worker*, I was not "defeated in a vote to liquidate DSYP". In fact, quite the opposite occurred. I moved a motion to transform the Democratic Socialists of Your Party into a Campaign for a Democratic Socialists of Great Britain.

This was defeated, not because it was necessarily unpopular, but because the meeting which decided the organisation's future was raided by members of RS21's Marxist Unity Caucus (hitherto inactive in DemSocs). It was *they* who failed in their attempt to liquidate the organisation into RS21 and, having failed to do so, voted *en masse* for a motion that effectively pushed for something akin to what I was proposing, put forward by Tina Becker - albeit a proposal significantly weaker and lacking substance to the one I had put forward. With the comrades from the Marxist Unity Caucus seemingly having no desire to actually help carry out such a policy, they turned up to vote for it and, with much of the previously active membership now inactive, what remains of the organisation is nothing more than a rump of what it once was.

For what it is worth, I never left the DSYP to try my "luck with the Members' Charter" either. That's just bollocks and the comrade knows it. Whatever gave him that impression I do not know, because I certainly did not mention it when I resigned my membership of the organisation some time ago. There's a tendency within the Democratic Socialists that thrives on rumours, half-truths and, to be frank, plain delusion.

Shortly before I left the organisation a rumour was going around that I had defected to the Green Party. This is despite me not having done so, and never once saying anything that would suggest I had any desire to do so. It's not the first time people from the said tendency have conjured up conspiracy theories about me, but I imagine that, when you seemingly draw your political analysis largely from the outcome of a late night session with a Ouija board, you can't expect much better than that.

I'd request that in the future Ian gets his facts straight before spouting gibberish as if it were the truth. The comrade, who I much admire, does himself (nor the organisation on whose executive he serves) no favours in failing to do so.

Max Shanly
email

YP IoW

On June 5, England's first-ever *official* Your Party branch was formally set up in the Isle of Wight (a Scottish one was formed two hours before!) But it was not as if YP comrades on the Wight had needed any prompting: many of us had helped set up and run, and been active in, the island's proto-branch since mid-August last

year. A dynamic committee had been elected, from within which the various posts required to run the organisation were assigned by the committee itself: a salutary democratic method, if ever there was one.

Unfortunately, Your Party officialdom has its own fish to fry - at a lower level of democratic functioning. Disregarding existing democracy on the ground, YP nationally refused the IoW proto-branch any contact information for those locally who had joined, leaving proto-branch officers as best they could to organise using social media, word of mouth, and local nous. And these officers' work was effective, allowing branch meetings to be held and discussions to proceed.

Despite this, the national bureaucracy wanted to pretend that *their* branch would be the first organised manifestation of the local membership, which is a lie. All that these YP tops have done so far is to hinder a real, strong enthusiasm for YP locally, leading some comrades previously committed to YP to leave it in disgust.

And so to the weekend's official branch launch. HQ membership officer Cassi Bellingham ran this, the national leadership's meeting (for that is what it clearly was). She reported a membership of 113 on the Isle of Wight, of whom up to 20 attended in person and four by Zoom link, which, helpfully for the leadership, came to slightly over 20% of the membership - the formal qualification for establishing a branch, according to the rule passed in Liverpool.

Cassi declared the event a "pilot launch", along with a Scottish and a Welsh branch the same weekend; apparently, more branches will be launched by the leadership, using the experience of the trio of pilots and attendees (the experimental mice).

Magnanimously, comrades in the Isle of Wight are permitted to choose whether to continue with one all-island branch (the IoW is a county) or split into two, reflecting the fact that there are two IoW parliamentary constituencies (the UK's smallest).

Cassi went on to announce the results of individual elections for five branch officers. These elections were held several days before this official meeting and were online only: neither nominations nor voting were in front of an in-person meeting of YP members. And, although there were hustings, these too were online. It was thus impossible to discuss face to face with those who put themselves forward (or others who might have been nominated beyond those nominating themselves). Crucially, lack of in-person presence meant being badly hampered in asking questions of clarification or determining whether nominated comrades could even operate in a normal, in-person meeting context. Online statements were all some members had to go on.

Thus, all members were excluded from being able to take part in a process that is the norm in branches of working class organisations - whether trade unions, political parties or any other body. In the case

of the IoW branch, as four nominees had been unopposed for the positions they sought, there was only an election for chair; this had taken place online a few days previously and was won by Christopher White. But almost a quarter of the local membership did not vote; that is, 77% took part, which does not bode well in a party only now setting up its official branches, nearly a year after it was born. Luckily for local comrades, those now in post in the *official* IoW branch have long had the confidence of local YP members, having already proved themselves within the IoW proto-party over the last year. We did not need a national imprimatur to anoint them for us.

Tellingly, there was no mention of branch autonomy at this baptism by those on high. However, in answer to a question from the floor (floor speakers' words were inaudible to those of us online) about branch funding, the national officer alleged that the Electoral Commission will take up to a year to fully accredit Your Party, so we shall have to wait that long before branches get their share of members' dues. But a charitable YP leadership will, she assured, be providing enough for branches to be set up, plus a little to eke out a modest existence (presumably until next year's local elections, this year's having been missed. So far, no-one has suggested collecting members' dues at branch meetings, which would surely help alleviate the Electoral Commission 'problem', if indeed that is a real thing. A future branch meeting agenda item for many around the country.

Then up popped Jeremy Corbyn, introduced carefully as "our parliamentary leader", speaking live from Ireland. JC gave congrats to all, etc, telling us he is soon jetting off to western Europe for a meeting about "working with the Belgian Workers' Party" and others. Emphasising the need for the branch to have "regular, open events in which anyone can come" (what, class enemies too?), he touched on how "we need political education", and stressed how YP was "very serious about our campaigning".

That, it appears, is campaigning for others, as YP materials sent to local members before the branch meeting say: "Official Your Party branches will be hubs for community organising, supporting the campaigns and struggles already happening on the ground. Whether that's industrial action, housing campaign, Palestine solidarity or fighting the far right - our branches should exist to amplify and support that work."

And that's it, as far as the leadership goes. Heaven forfend that branches might like to consider ideological questions and how to prepare ourselves and our class for revolution. The real political discussions, such as they might be, are only allowable for the leadership faction (*à la* SWP, etc). Well, we have seen the dire level to which YP bureaucrats are able to sink: trying to sound radical, but with a mangled

form of neo-auto-Labourism and reformism. JC sounds like someone waiting for a call back to the Labour Party.

After these less than scintillating proceedings and more than an hour into the meeting, the newly elected branch officers were still not running the meeting, though they were at this point given the mic in turn to introduce themselves briefly. Several of the new officers confidently described themselves as "revolutionary socialist" or "communist".

In response earlier to a question from the floor about YP being a revolutionary party, Cassi had assured members: "Don't think everyone in backrooms is going to tell you what to do! ... I think you can be revolutionary without spending your [personal] capital..." Whatever that meant precisely, clearly the leadership's aim is to envelop and smother individual comrades with excellent intentions, but preventing them doing anything in unison with like-minded others as a group (party managerialism's dreaded 'factionalism' (see below).

There was a desultory end to the meeting, when in-person participants went off to get food, to be followed by informal discussion with putative 'others' (non-members). Needless to say, these 'others' were not visible to those still online ... and their actual existence has yet to be established.

Branch members now await news of their first real meeting. In the interim, important questions arise. Financing the branch's work is clearly going to be a problem if the national misleadership is going to drip-feed money from members' dues to good and obedient (to the leadership) branches,

with less or none to the truly revolutionary or simply less biddable branches. What degree of autonomy will branches enjoy? What are the limits to acting autonomously, as seen from on high? Basic branch organisation requires the branch committee and its officers to have direct access to all branch members via email, text, phone or post. Will this information be made available to them? We know that the YP leadership tried to strangle proto-branches by refusing to give access to lists of members. So there must be no reversion to this approach: all branches must be immediately given members' updated contact information. We must strongly resist any suggestion that branch officers only communicate with members via a YP HQ email system, which would replicate the foul Labour Party model of supervision and control of branches.

Many of us have seen left party leadership factions before, of course, whether in the old CPGB, SWP, SPEW, Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, or now in Your Party. These leaderships' hypocrisy is a recipe for disaster, and completely against any claimed internal democracy: their dishonest factional command approach is the antithesis of what is needed. Openly operating factions, on the other hand, are a sign of a healthy democracy in a working class party. If YP honchos cannot stand that particular heat, then they should get out of the proverbial kitchen. Workers viewing from the outside parties with healthy debate are far more likely to trust, to join and to actively take part in political struggle within society, with this template of extreme democracy to marshal all our forces for revolution in

Online Communist Forum



Sunday June 14 5pm

Once again US turns to negotiating with bombs

Political report from the CPGB's Provisional Central Committee and discussion

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

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

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

unity.
YP members shall not be slaves to a bureaucracy - something many of us escaped from in the Labour Party. Branches have to determine their own priorities, using finance from a large portion of members' dues. Branch members everywhere are not children to be taught: we know our local conditions better than anyone and can and must be able to determine through debate and discussion how our branches shall operate. Our meetings must be declared sovereign by us, depending only on the support of members about how we prioritise and deprioritise tasks and the overall way forward - baldly, they must be truly ours.

Your Party is *our party* or it's nothing.

Jim Moody
Isle of Wight

Common ground

Last Saturday I attended the Connections Convention, where around 150 socialists from across the political spectrum, including independent socialists, members of new groups such as the Socialist Federation, and those still navigating the remnants of Your Party came together to debate how to rebuild the left following bureaucratic manipulation that led to heavy expulsions from YP.

Clearly, there were differing views on the way forward. However, as Tina Becker argued, we need a different culture on the left if we ever want to be able to build the kind of party we need - where different views are allowed to openly compete. She also noted that those present had no illusions about the Green Party.

Ultimately, attendees found common ground, agreeing a consensus statement to network local branches, organise an all-Britain conference by early 2027 to prepare for local elections, and lay the groundwork for a democratic, member-led socialist party. The meeting also committed to continuing to build and connect local socialist branches, and to organise

regional meetings to strengthen these networks, regardless of whether they remain affiliated with YP.

Farzad Kamangar
email

Modern Greens

Jack Conrad's description of the history of the Green Party of England and Wales is certainly fascinating ('Our flag stays red' June 4). However, in future articles about the party I suggest comrade Conrad focuses on its more recent history. The wacky origins of the party, while interesting, ultimately, have not had much influence on recent events.

It is important to properly understand the modern Green Party and what purpose it serves politically. The fact of the matter is that its real political orientation is that of a social democratic (ie, reforming capitalism) workers' party. Yes, the Green Party is a workers' party, in the same sense that the Labour Party was for most of the 20th century - a workers' party that aims to advance the interests of workers as much as is possible *within the limits of capitalism*.

The manifestos of the Green Party, for at least the past decade, have all indicated that its preferred society is essentially a post-war social democratic welfare state with green energy - effectively the same as a Corbyn manifesto (or for that matter the immediate aims of most British socialist groups). The average Green Party supporter is now a young *working class* voter - that is, if we understand the working class to consist of people who must labour to live.

Exit polling by Survation for the recent Gorton and Denton by-election indicated that the Green Party won about 49% of the vote of workers, while Reform and Labour managed 28% and 21% respectively. As much as some readers may think that Green Party voters are all leafy, wealthy 'middle class types', this really isn't the case. It may have been true a decade ago when the party was trying

to appeal to a specific 'pro-EU, anti-Corbyn' electorate (which seemed to amount to 1.6% of the vote in 2017 and 2.6% of the vote in 2019 - a completely insignificant amount, compared to its recent polling of anywhere between 10% and 19%), but the fact of the matter is that it has over recent years transformed itself into the party of Britain's class-conscious (albeit at the level of 'trade unionist' consciousness) working class.

That doesn't mean that leafy middle class Greens don't exist - the main battle within the party is between those 'traditional' Greens and the Corbynite workers that have joined recently. The recent controversy about former party leader Caroline Lucas endorsing Andy Burnham is indicative of this battle between the liberal Greens, many of whom were elected as MPs or councillors before the tens of thousands of Corbynites joined, and the (more numerous) social democratic faction. The *Weekly Worker's* reporting should be more focussed on this aspect of the Green Party - the ideologies that actually influence the modern party.

This isn't an argument for entryism into the Green Party - with Marxists being so divided into so many different groups, I don't think we'd really have much impact on the Greens at all. Instead the focus of Marxists at the moment has to be unification, even if that's initially an incomplete unification, where all the various groups retain their independence, while being part of some alliance or federation. Marxists were defeated within Your Party partially because of this lack of coordination, despite the very valiant and heroic effort of establishing the Grassroots Left slate in time for the CEC elections.

We need some sort of united Marxist party and, when that party is established, we have to make our case to British class-conscious workers why we are more worthy of their support than the Greens. That case has to address the problems of the modern Green Party, not ideologies of the 1970s that don't influence them.

Dovah
Oxfordshire

Illusory sun

The letter headed 'Christian lens' (May 28) seeks to reconcile "religious traditionalism and historical materialism". While an individual may be able to accommodate both perspectives within their own lives with some degree of (at least to them) harmony, a sober philosophical analysis makes it more difficult. That we can hold two different perspectives - harmonious or antithetical, parallel or orthogonal - with each other at once is not in question. It may even be 'easy' for an individual, but is it correct or coherent?

Biologist Richard Lewontin wrote that "the reason that people do not have a correct view of nature is not that they are ignorant of this or that fact about the material world, but that they look to the wrong sources in their attempt to understand". I take this to hold, when considering the social world. Lewontin goes on to say: "It is not that the methods and

institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door."

Scepticism over reconciling religious tradition and historical materialism is not a value judgment of the individuals attempting such accommodation, but rather of the utility and philosophical coherence of such an enterprise. There is, of course, a rich tradition on the left of those who found deep inspiration in their respective religious traditions - liberation theology, Catholic worker, etc. Their existence isn't indicative of their correctness. In JH's letter it's asserted that some have an "innate drive toward spiritual life" - this I assume can mean one of two things:

- (1) It's genetic (but I'm not sure what bits of DNA would/could make spiritual life innate) and/or
- (2) It's a non-material, dualist force.

I'd take issue with both, but maybe the letter-writer had something else in mind and I'm reading it too literally.

Anecdotally, evidence of left flirtation with religious traditions are popping up on my social media feeds, and I'm curious as to why this is happening. Several decades of working class defeat, despondence, terror-management? I'm not sure. Because some on the left find solace or meaning in religion, which is clearly the case, it should not mean we make a virtue out of such apparent necessity to them. There's an old joke I'd hear back home in Belfast about navigating the sectarian binary as a non-believer:

"Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

"I'm an atheist."

"Are you a Catholic atheist or a Protestant atheist?"

Well, I suppose I'm a Catholic atheist in that sense then. However, the fact that the religion of my upbringing still brings meaning and solace to many is no evidence of its coherence or truth value. Indeed "the criticism of religion is the foundation of all criticism".

Marx wrote in *A contribution to the critique of Hegel's philosophy of right* that the "struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." There is no reason to interpret this - or any sensible, humane critique of religion - as a denial of the sincerity of those who feel a spiritual or religious pull. It is an acknowledgement that the earnest draw to religion that some feel is historically

contingent.

Calling for the "abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people" is, necessarily for Marx, a "demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo."

A principled materialist critique of religion plucks "the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower. The criticism of religion disillusions man, so that he will think, act and fashion his reality like a man who has discarded his illusions and regained his senses, so that he will move around himself as his own true sun. Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself."

Marx's words from the 1840s are less about criticising religion because it's 'bad' or 'wrong' *per se*, but rather because the task of transforming the world has to be preceded by confronting and understanding it as it is.

So the question remains not whether we *can* hold both perspectives at once, but rather whether we *should*.

Conor McC
London

Exaggeration

Tony Greenstein decided to boycott the talk he was due to give at Palestine House last weekend because I was also on the bill (talking about my ongoing campaign to get Hamas deproscribed, which you can sign at www.tiny.cc/hamas).

Tony told the organiser that he could not speak alongside someone who said the holocaust was exaggerated. I'd like to set the record straight, because I never said this, as Tony well knows. I had said that "Israel exaggerates the holocaust for political ends" to my GMB union boss, Gary Smith. This was when he was suspending me for breaching the IHRA definition - for saying Israel was a "racist endeavour" (one of the seven criticisms of Israel that is used as an example of 'Jew hate'). I was setting out to show that this 'definition' of anti-Semitism was bogus and politicised, and was used to protect Israel, not Jews.

According to the Merriam-Webster definition, to "exaggerate" can mean to "overemphasise" and it is in this context I used it. Israel exaggerates the holocaust for political ends to paint its own 'victim status', to justify its existence and its protection by the west - and, of course, its ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people, who most Israelis like to think are intent on carrying out another genocide of their own - which, of course, is not true: Hamas has declared repeatedly that it would live alongside Jews in a democratic Palestine, if they gave up their Zionist aspirations.

Pete Gregson
Edinburgh

Fighting fund

Good work

With exactly a third of the month gone, we are on course to reach our £2,750 fighting fund target for June. That's because we've already raised £936, which is just a tiny bit over a third of that target!

Heading the list, when it comes to generosity amongst this week's donors, is comrade TB, with his fantastic £95, paid via PayPal. Others using the same method were ST (£20), AB (£11), MH (£10), JN and NL (£5 each). Then we had eight comrades who donated either by bank transfer or standing order - thanks also to TW (£50), CG and DV (£30), RG (£25), RD (£12), SM and PM (£10), plus NL (£5). Finally, who could forget comrade Hassan, who handed his usual £5 note to one of our team?

All that comes to £318, which, together with the £618 received in the first three days of the month, takes the *Weekly Worker* up to

that £936 running total for June already mentioned. But now we want to make sure we reach the target in the remaining two thirds of the month, so please play your part in helping us to get there. If you need more details on how to contribute, please go to the web page below.

As new reader GJ wrote when paying for her first subscription, "Never before have I come across a Marxist journal that puts into practice such democratic debate, including from your opponents. Keep up the good work!" If you agree with her, please ensure we can indeed keep up that good work! ●

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

POLICE

Explaining Henry Nowak

Far-right demagogues exploit the murder of a young man to attack migrants. But the left would be wrong to line up behind multicultural liberalism and the police, argues Paul Demarty

Last December, Henry Nowak - a first-year undergraduate at Southampton University - was murdered while walking home, by another young man, Vickrum Singh Digwa. Digwa has just been sentenced.

On the face of it, there is nothing *terrifically* shocking about this event. Murder obviously comes as a shock to the victim and those known to the victim; but it happens. Young men like Nowak and Digwa are vastly more likely to both perpetrate and suffer violence than any other demographic. So far as the events leading up to the killing can be discerned, Nowak was filming a social media clip and teasing Digwa, who had something of a sense-of-humour failure about the whole thing. In the ensuing altercation, Digwa stabbed Nowak with a Sikh ceremonial dagger. Not the most common murder weapon, but in a fight it is basically just a knife like any other. You could knock somebody on the head with a crucifix or menorah as easily as a hammer.

What fails to be explained about this crime, then, is above all the insistence with which it is *being* explained. A bang-average tragedy is being interpreted with the furious imagination brought by Talmudic rabbis to the process of construction of Noah's Ark. Above all, this is a tragedy made to measure for the modern right - a young white man murdered by a non-white man, whose mother immigrated to this country.

The complicating factor that makes the rightwing narrative possible is, of course, the lamentable performance of the police in this case. Called out to the scene, they immediately believed Digwa's (false) assertion that he had been racially abused, and disbelieved Nowak's (true) pleas that he had been stabbed, handcuffing him without even bothering to check. In a morbid echo of the death of George Floyd, Nowak's last words were "I can't breathe"; all of this was caught on the cops' bodycams.

The pathologist assured the trial that if the cops had been more alert to Nowak's condition, the internal injuries he had suffered would have been impossible to treat under the circumstances, and he would have died anyway. Even if true, this is hardly much of an emollient. The cops were not to know that, after all; the next stabbing victim they fail to take seriously *may* be saveable.

When the verdict was delivered - and *sub judice* rules lifted enough to give a full picture of Nowak's last hours - there was an immediate explosion of anger. A rowdy protest in Southampton threatened to turn into a riot, with demonstrators attempting to reach the Digwa home with no doubt malicious intent. The police were able to prevent it, but there was some property damage nevertheless. We were not treated, in the end, to a repeat of the lawless violence that followed on from the Southport murders two years ago.

Two-tier?

The rightwing interpretation of events is similar to that of the policing of the 2024 riots - that this was an example of "two-tier" policing, and the cops have been so indoctrinated with modern anti-racist training that they allow ethnic minorities to get away with acts for which white people will be aggressively prosecuted. This was plainly untrue of the 2024 riots, which resulted in a comparable numbers of arrests to the 2011 riots which



Henry Nowak: three hours before his murder

followed the police killing of a black man in Tottenham.

But, this time around, the bodycam footage clearly showed the police taking the perpetrator's account of things more seriously than the victim's. Freely generalising from a single case to a general description of policing in this country is plainly illegitimate, but the Nowak murder is certainly not evidence *against* the 'two-tier' charge. So is it fair? I think Kenan Malik - often a level-headed writer on these matters - had it right in *The Observer* on June 7:

Two-tier policing existed long before rightwing commentators discovered it. Certain groups have always been singled out as particular threats to social order and subject to differential treatment. When the targets of excessive policing were almost exclusively black people, or Irish republicans or working-class militants, many on the right celebrated it as the necessary enforcement of law and order. What has changed in recent years is that the boundaries have shifted. The authorities have become more sensitive to issues of race and identity, while the policing of sections of the working class deemed to be racist has become more assertive.¹

In other words, there is something 'two-tier' about professional policing *as such*. For Marxists, this is hardly surprising. We sometimes forget how *new* it is, in grand historical terms - the first contingents of 'Peelers' date to 1829, and the abolition of the standing police force was a bread-and-butter demand of the workers' and democratic movements for close to a century after that (a popular militia even featured in the first Labour manifesto). The formation of the regular police force was an attempt to create a loyal and well-organised instrument of physical force under the control of the central state, and

its objectives very much included the suppression of malevolent "agitators", as Malik's summary indicates.

As a weapon of arbitrary state power, and given that the state primarily defends *class* interests, it is entirely inevitable that some will be better protected by the boys and girls in blue than others. Their violence will usually be meted out to the lower orders; the petty neighbourhood dealer gets the book thrown at him, while the high-end provider of white powders for the HSBC Christmas party proceeds unimpeded. Migrant populations tend to be overrepresented in the lower orders, and feel the policeman's truncheon more often. The fact that in recent decades (particularly since the 1999 MacPherson inquiry) multiculturalist anti-racism has largely been part of the official ideology opens the way to strange results like the cops' failure to believe Nowak, coming upon what they no doubt supposed to be a routine fight between two young thugs.

There is always *something*, however, some axis on which arbitrary power turns: and even the modern anti-racist influence should not be overstated. Malik reminds us, as many *Guardian* types also have recently, that the police still disproportionately arrest and harass black and Asian people. Political surveys of serving officers reliably find an overwhelming bias towards the right. Their day-to-day lives, dealing with petty criminals, drug addicts and wife-beaters, engender a deeply cynical attitude to humanity: a kind of Calvinism without the elect.

The failure of the left in relation to the police is not, as the right thinks, in its *success* in 'woke indoctrination', but in its adoption of popular-frontist identity politics that drag us into zero-sum competition over the favour of the state apparatus. A left that maintained a consistent revolutionary distrust of the state would have much more to say about Nowak's death, and perhaps the right would have to fight

us over its meaning. That is plainly not the case today, and instead it is battle stations for more essentially defensive actions against the far right, inevitably in tacit *alliance* with the police.

America

That is about all that can be said about the event itself, but the political controversy is its own story. The Tories, Reform UK and Rupert Lowe's especially fruity Restore Britain are all competing to express the most outrage. It was Kemi Badenoch's turn, this time, to go 'full Enoch Powell' and portentously warn of "civil war" if things were not mended. It is a strange look; after all, anyone who took that 'warning' seriously would not vote for you, Kemi, and you and I both know why ... Yet she must find some purchase in a political situation still extremely hostile to the Conservative Party.

Indeed, there are rumours of a kind of non-aggression pact between the Tories and Restore. Improved results for Rupert's merry men, after all, will benefit the Tories in the short term, since they can surely only steal votes from Reform, who are currently destroying the Tory vote. A major division on the far right will be demoralising for its voters, leaving Kemi and co as the only 'serious' option for red-blooded British patriots (or so the thinking goes ...).² The notably turbulent patterns of vote-switching on the right (and, for that matter, on the left, between Labour and the Greens) testify to the institutional shallowness of modern political feeling, broadly in line with the diagnosis of Anton Jäger's interesting recent book, *Hyperpolitics*.

Yet even this is too small a canvas, since the Nowak controversy has become a site of intervention by the *American* government in British politics. Lowe's outfit is plainly a creation of the American right, specifically Elon Musk, who encouraged the split from Reform after falling out with Nigel Farage.

JD Vance took a break from muttering about demons flying UFOs to warn that this event was a consequence of mass migration, as if there were no murders in British cities until the arrival of the Windrush generation ... and Sikhs

The murder has attracted major attention in US rightwing media too. This must be placed in the context of the recent publication of a new 'national security' strategy, which - along with promising more muscular action in America's backyard - denounced European powers for "open borders" and the risk of civilisational extinction, along with attacks on "free speech" (meaning only attacks on the free speech of the *far right*, as with various police actions against the likes of the French National Rally and Alternative for Germany). This can only be interpreted as a formal shift in American influence in Europe: where before it ruled by controlling the parties of centre-right and centre-left, it now proposes to do so by propping up the far right.

A Europe hostage to rival squads of bickering chauvinists, of course, will be much easier for a declining USA to keep down, and some level of 'Somalification' may ultimately result. If there is a danger of 'civil war', then it surely stems from this, just as (for example) the Syrian civil war was prolonged largely by US backing for sundry sectarian Sunni militias and Kurdish separatists. Squabble though they might, Farage, Lowe and Badenoch have one thing in common: grovelling servility towards the United States government.

This does not pose any particularly new challenges for the left *per se*. We already oppose British participation in the criminal enterprise of US imperialism (or ought to; the proxy war in Ukraine has regrettably caused a lot of backsliding here). We already oppose the march of far-right national chauvinism. It is easy enough to oppose both at the same time.

Yet a purely *negative* attitude is not enough. After all, when rightwing ideologues complain about our low-trust society, they are not *wholly* wrong to do so. Half a century of relentless defeats for the workers' movement, deindustrialisation and neoliberal attacks on state capacity have, in fact, produced that outcome. The right is wrong to blame this on immigration; and, indeed, the attempt to place the blame there is *itself* a further attack on the social fabric and 'trust'.

Which brings us back to the spontaneous ideology of the beat cop, who inhabits the lowest-trust parts of society as a matter of course. The pro-social solution here is what it has always been: the end of the police force as a power over the general population - recruited from it often with naive ideals of protecting ordinary people, but rapidly inculturated into the ineliminable nihilism of the force - and its replacement by mandatory, well-drilled, democratic militia service for all. Only the militia could truly use legitimate force, reliably viewed as such by wider society, and only the militia could keep in mind the good as well as the bad in that society, as it does so •

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Notes

1. [observers.co.uk/news/politics/article/in-weaponising-henry-nowaks-tragic-death-the-right-has-come-full-circle-on-identity-politics](https://www.observers.co.uk/news/politics/article/in-weaponising-henry-nowaks-tragic-death-the-right-has-come-full-circle-on-identity-politics).
2. As reported in the *Financial Times*: www.ft.com/content/c88c02dc-ace1-49fc-af71-e828d9f6794f.

ECONOMICS

Just one big trade

Hype around AI remains so big that essentially all private investments in the US are now in tech hardware and software. But if AI is to succeed for capital, writes **Michael Roberts**, it will be at the expense of the working class

Goldman Sachs, the mega investment bank, reckons that artificial intelligence is just “one big trade on the US economy”. And the AI investment bubble is getting even larger. The AI model maker, Anthropic, has just announced it was issuing shares to potential investors in (what is called in stock market jargon) an initial public offering (IPO). Anthropic was following the planned IPO of Elon Musk’s SpaceX - a humongous \$1.8 trillion. This would value SpaceX in the market at 92 times its annual revenue!

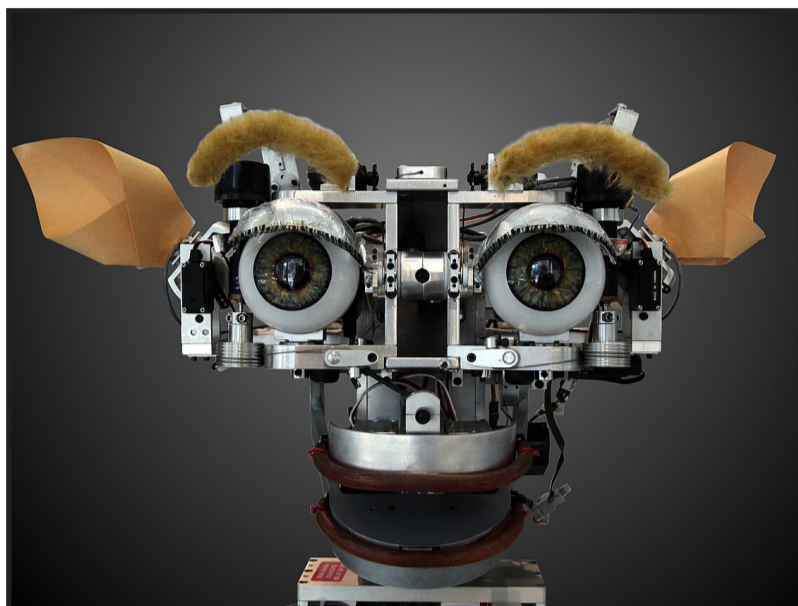
Alphabet, Google’s parent, also plans to raise \$85 billion in equity funding - its first stock offering in more than two decades. Together, these three giant IPOs could command a combined valuation of around \$4 trillion: that is one-third of all the value of US IPOs since 1980 (inflation-adjusted)! And yet SpaceX, OpenAI and Anthropic are all currently loss-making, while the commercial potential of AI models (in the case of SpaceX going to Mars) remains unknown.

AI is one big trade for the US stock market investors and one big bet on the US economy. That is because the amount of capital investment being made by the companies called the ‘hyperscalers’ into AI models, data centres and other AI equipment is staggering. As a share of US gross domestic product, it is now set to far surpass the 19th-century railroad build-out.

Back in December 1996, then Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan characterised the boom in technology, media and telecom stocks as showing signs of “irrational exuberance”. Almost 30 years later, we can say the same with bells on about the AI boom. This is already much larger than the dot.com internet investment of the late 1990s ever was. In 2025, US businesses invested almost \$1.5 trillion in information technology (IT) equipment and software. At the peak of the dot.com bubble, it was \$466 billion (or \$829 billion when adjusted for inflation). The hyperscalers - Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, Meta and Oracle - plan to invest hundreds of billions in the next five years in data centres to provide the computing power to run these AI models. Capital investments are expected to rise by 20% a year - a growth rate never seen before in this industry.

US GDP growth is now driven almost exclusively by rising tech spending. If this starts to drop, the US economy will enter recession very quickly, even if tech investments decline only by a little bit - say, 4-6%, as happened after much smaller tech booms in the 1960s and during the 2009 recession.

As I recently showed, US corporate profits have risen significantly.¹ But, according to Brian Green in a recent post,² around 80% of the increase in US non-financial corporate profits came from Nvidia and hyperscalers. The stock market is increasingly concentrated in a handful of A-linked stocks, which now account for roughly 40% of the Standard and Poor (S&P) 500’s market capitalisation, according to Bank of America data. Headline profitability is being flattered by a small slice of



Kismet, robot head made in 1990s: can simulate emotions

the economy earning extraordinary returns from the scramble to build AI capacity. The risk, then, is that the economy, the profit cycle and the stock market “are all leaning on the same narrow pillar. If the expected returns on AI infrastructure and platforms are questioned, the fallout may not stop at a few richly valued technology stocks”.³

As I have pointed out previously,⁴ up to now the massive investment in AI has been mostly funded by the profits already being made by the hyperscalers. But, given the impossibility of finding enough additional revenues to self-finance their capital expenditure (capex) plans, hyperscalers and their hardware providers are increasingly using external financing to fund them.

Circular financing

The first game is ‘circular financing’: ie, cross-investments between Microsoft, OpenAI and others. In essence, a cash-rich hyperscaler like Microsoft buys hardware from Nvidia, AMD and other suppliers. Nvidia then uses that revenue to buy a multi-billion-dollar stake in OpenAI. OpenAI then uses this cash to ‘secure compute’ in Microsoft data centres. Microsoft itself also invests in OpenAI and enters into a mutual revenue share, where some of OpenAI’s revenues flow to Microsoft and vice versa, as the two companies use each other’s products. Assuming that Microsoft spends \$100 billion to order hardware for data centres, Nvidia, AMD and other suppliers can recognise that as \$100 billion in revenue. They then use that cash to invest in OpenAI (for example), which then uses this money to book data centre capacity with Microsoft. Microsoft recognises this OpenAI investment as revenue, thus effectively turning its \$100 billion expense into billions of revenue!

Even this is no longer enough, and increasingly, hyperscalers have started to resort to borrowing to raise the cash for investment. The US tech giants are issuing debt all over the world. Google/Alphabet is leading the charge.

So first they invested with their own funds; then in each other; then they borrowed from the banks and so-called private credit funds; and now they are putting the risk of

success or failure on investors in the stock market. If all this investment fails to deliver the expected returns, it will hit the financial sector and the wider economy big time.⁵

But don’t worry: say revenues for the AI companies and hyperscalers are expected to grow 15% annually. If we make the heroic assumption that there are no costs, then this additional revenue is the profit these companies are expected to make from their additional investments in AI data centres. Yet, even under these extremely optimistic assumptions, the implied return on investment is highly negative for all except Amazon.

If the hyperscalers need to generate, say, a 10% return on investment, they would have to find an additional \$2-5 trillion in revenue a year. That is a tall order for a group of companies that currently generates revenues of just \$1.5 trillion per year. The other option is that the planned investment in data centres, computer chips and other areas never materialises - maybe as equity investors turn more cautious on the sector, or if debt funding for data centres becomes harder to get. A JP Morgan analysis found that more than 60% of data centre capacity planned for completion in 2027 is not yet under construction, and another 7% is delayed.⁶ What will happen if these companies announce cutbacks on some of their investment plans?

Will the AI heroes, OpenAI and Anthropic, deliver the returns that the hyperscalers and their investors hope and expect? Corporate CEOs are optimistic. Over the last three years, since OpenAI launched ChatGPT, they claim that cumulative productivity gains have been in the order of 0.3% to 1% per year. For the next three years, they estimate productivity gains will accelerate to 1.4%, with executives in the US and UK far more optimistic than in Germany and Australia.

These productivity gains, they reckon, will be achieved by shedding labour. Business leaders expect headcount in their firms to drop by about 0.7% in the next three years - again with executives in the US and the UK expecting far more pronounced drops in employment than executives in Germany and Australia. In the last three years, the same executives saw no employment impact from AI. So

this is all expectation. Moreover, the Business Trends and Outlook Survey of the US Census Bureau shows that companies with 50 employees or more show no more growth in AI use since the second quarter of 2025. Businesses are still unsure how to use AI effectively and are increasingly worried about the drawbacks when they do.

Those drawbacks include ‘hallucinations’ (ie, fictions made up by the AI model), which are inherent in large language models (LLMs). One study found that for a training set of 32,000 words, the average hallucination rate in LLMs was 6.8%. When that was expanded to 128,000 words, the average rose to 10%. That is a lot of correction time and monitoring for human workers!

Another problem is that, because LLMs are designed to be ‘good at everything’, they are not very good at *any one thing*, compared to specialised apps. One report on using AI in software development found an explosive impact at the start, with coders creating or editing almost 300% more files - but that boost was halved to 150% by the time companies got the number of pieces of work submitted for review, and that in turn shrunk five-fold to a roughly 30% uplift at the point of full software release.

Moreover, when researchers looked at whether AI-assisted increases in software production have led to increased usage by clients, they found little evidence. The marked increase in mobile app releases over the past year has not been accompanied by any increase in downloads - most of the new apps fail to capture even a modest audience.

Meanwhile, OpenAI has burnt through some \$6 billion, rising to \$17 billion in 2026. By 2028, inference (training) costs alone are expected to grow to \$121 billion and losses are projected to be \$85 billion. Anthropic’s cash burn is much smaller, but was still \$3 billion in 2025. Unless the companies that build LLMs can find large amounts of new revenue in the next couple of years, the losses will increase exponentially, especially given the fact that current price charged per ‘token’ is not the true cost of compute. If AI companies were to charge the actual cost price per token, the losses may decline, but demand for LLMs would decline even more.

Despite this, the hype around AI remains so big that essentially all private investments in the US are now in tech hardware and software. Over the last three years, the average annual growth in IT equipment investments has been 11% and 8% in software. Meanwhile, investments in all other parts of the US economy put together have declined by 1.6% per year.

Two in one

The US economy today really is two economies in one. There is the tech economy and then there is everything else. Over the last four quarters to the end of March 2026, 93% of US GDP growth is due to tech investment alone (although much of the purchases are imports and not produced domestically).

This is a bubble waiting to burst. In the aftermath of the dot.com

technology, media and telecom (TMT) bubble, private fixed investment dropped more than 12.7% between 2000 and the end of 2002, as a recession took hold in the US. In the initial year after the TMT bubble burst, tech investments dropped 12%, while fixed investments in general dropped 7.6%.

Gita Gopinath, former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, has calculated that an AI stock market crash equivalent to that which ended the dot.com boom, would erase some \$20 trillion in American household wealth and another \$15 trillion abroad - enough to strangle consumer spending and induce a global recession.⁷ This is also the view of the IMF. The IMF fears that AI firms could fail to deliver earnings commensurate with their lofty valuations. The collapse of previous investment booms knocked about 1% on average off US real GDP growth. Even a moderate correction in AI stock valuations would reduce global growth by 0.4%: “Combined with lower-than-expected total factor productivity gains, and a more significant correction in equity markets, global output losses could increase further, concentrated in tech-heavy regions such as the United States and Asia.”⁸ Another study has found that even a very mild drop in tech investment of just 3% would cut US real GDP growth by 1% - or half the current rate (the impact would be greater in Europe).⁹

None of this is to conclude that AI will not at some point deliver with higher profitability for the companies involved and higher productivity for the US economy as a whole. But that will not happen before there is a bursting of the investment bubble - as there was in the railway mania of the 1870s¹⁰ and in dot.com bubble of the late 1990s. As other studies have shown, it will take a decade or more for AI to become a generalised technology that delivers.

For working people, AI poses a different problem. For capital and the mega media companies, the aim is to make AI a profitable technology, but that can only be done by shedding labour and by stopping any attempt to regulate its applications and use. If AI is to succeed for capital, it will only be at the expense of most working people and their families ●

Michael Roberts blogs at
thenextrecession.wordpress.com

Notes

1. See thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2026/06/02/global-profits-an-upward-turn.
2. theplanningmotive.com/2026/05/30/the-us-economy-in-q1-2026-stronger-than-expected.
3. www.ft.com/content/d62da0d0-41ab-4d04-86d6-548d90629aaf.
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5. See thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2026/02/26/citirini-and-the-ai-doom-scenario.
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YP

Another fine mess

Corbyn's Your Party has finally started to set up some tightly-controlled branches. Meanwhile most of the left and much of the membership has long gone. **Carla Roberts reports**

The May 7 meeting of Your Party's central executive committee (CEC) was missing Jeremy Corbyn's right-hand woman, Karie Murphy (who was "travelling"). No worries. We hear that the meeting followed, word for word, the four-page report produced by Murphy for the YP officers' group. So there really was no need for her to be there in person. Though she is not a member of the CEC, Murphy usually plays a very active role, including sending messages to chair Jenn Forbes, telling her what to do about this or that.

Of course, this is how things have been done in YP ever since Corbyn's leadership faction, The Many, won an outright majority in the CEC elections in February. Supporters of Grassroots Left are merely there to give the illusion of democracy. In reality, their votes are not needed - and not counted. Literally each and every decision has already been taken by the officers' group, which is made up exclusively of supporters of The Many.

The latest officers' report presented to the CEC is yet again full of the empty waffle which is characteristic of Murphy, with a lot of hot air and very few details. It includes, for example, a section on the

need to strengthen membership recruitment, supporter conversion and member retention as part of the next phase of party development. A conversion and retention strategy should proceed using email, text and telephone follow-up where appropriate. The framing should be positive: recruitment, supporter conversion and organising capacity, not internal weakness.

Heaven forbid YP should talk honestly about any of its weaknesses or problems - official optimism only, thank you very much.

CEC political officer Louise Regan (a member of the secretive sect, Socialist Action) announced that "a local government network will be established", which is very explicitly not just aimed at YP and is likely to include politicians like Tower Hamlets mayor Lutfur Rahman and his communalist group, Aspire, as well as other organisations, some of which were financially supported by YP in the recent local elections.

Regan also announced that a "by-election protocol" had been agreed by the officers, which was operating on the "principle that future decisions should be based on local capacity, campaign credibility, political usefulness and branch-building priorities". Based on this rather obvious "protocol", the officers decided that "the party should not stand in Hackney/Dalston. The local priority there is branch formation and resolving existing divisions." There will also be no YP candidate in Makerfield, because the party "has limited local activist capacity". This is apparently not a problem in Wrexham/Grosvenor, where "it was agreed that the party should support standing in this election and operational support should continue, as a candidate and campaign team are in place."

Grassroots Left

The by-election protocol is supposed to "ensure transparency and consistency when determining Your Party support", we read in the officers' report. Funnily enough, we hear that when GL supporters asked during the CEC meeting where they could read the actual protocol, chair



Zarah Sultana: pushed a dithering Corbyn into launch

Jenn Forbes explained that, "it is an operational paper, so it would not have been circulated" and "would not be published". Of course, secrecy is always the best way to ensure "transparency"!

In a similar vein, Dawn Aspinall read out, word for word, the section in the officers' report mentioning "the conduct concerns involving CEC members, including behaviour in WhatsApp groups and meetings. A distinction should be maintained between political disagreement, disruptive conduct and matters requiring formal action."

No details were presented on any of those "conduct concerns". Who is supposed to have done which naughty thing remains a mystery. Also, there is no CEC WhatsApp group, so presumably some CEC members *might* get into trouble for having posted something in unrelated groups. GL supporters, against whom this is clearly directed, might or might not find out the charges against them, when "a conduct and complaints

report" has been produced, which will include "possible standing orders action, where appropriate".

Previous references to "conduct concerns" included the fact that "confidential" documents had been published, for example by the *Weekly Worker*. There is, as an aside, no coherence or logic to it. Sometimes, CEC meetings are being called with even the agenda tagged as 'confidential'; then, at the next meeting, nothing is labelled secret. And it is not as if CEC meetings are getting to see anything that could be described as really requiring secrecy - complaints against a specific member, for example, or delicate financial matters. None of these things are even discussed by the CEC - they are all a matter for the organising group (which, unlike the CEC, does not publish minutes or reports).

No, the announcement of a "conduct and complaints report" is designed to further cow and to control the opposition. We cannot say it has not been successful. As we have

reported, Grassroots Left has long stopped being any kind of coherent grouping, chiefly because of a refusal by a number of GL CEC members to simply ignore Murphy's absurd demands for secrecy.¹ Surely, YP members should be able to find out, without censorship, what their elected leadership is up to. More than that: if we are serious about building a party of the whole working class, then we should be conducting our business openly and in front of that class, surely. Why on earth should members not see the full agenda or all documents sent to the CEC, for example?

To make matters worse, these GL CEC members seem to have entirely internalised this bureaucratic culture. They have been egged on in that by Richard Brenner, former leader of the Trotskyist sect, Workers Power (who is now playing a leading role in the Socialist Federation). They have been insisting on holding GL meetings in 'closed sessions', for example, with the demand that any reports would have to be 'approved' first. They also

drafted an incredibly bureaucratic code of conduct for GL, which amounts to a thinly-veiled attempt to basically stop the elected GL CEC members from being criticised and "pestered". Most codes of conduct are bad enough, but this one really took the biscuit: it would have made GL supporters *accountable to their elected representatives*, turning the idea of accountability entirely on its head.

This bureaucratic behaviour was strongly opposed by most of the other groups involved in GL, too, including Democratic Socialists and Socialist Alternative. The Trotskyist sect Workers Power was the only one in support. No decent opposition could have come out of such attempts to curb free speech, transparency and openness. Without learning some serious lessons from this disaster, the left is bound to fail, over and over again.

Branch rollout

The main item of the June 7 CEC meeting was the "branch rollout". Membership officer Cassie Bellingham reported excitedly from the "pilot" branch launch on the Isle of Wight on June 6, "which had 70 people in the room and a bunch of people online", which "went so well that I am buzzing!" Perhaps the latter explains why she seems to have had some serious trouble counting the number of people in the room. In fact, there were four members online and about 20 local members present - a figure which is supported by Bellingham's own pictures² (there were also two people from HQ present). With YP claiming that there are 113 local members, a turnout of 24 is less than impressive - and it just about meets the 20% quorum required as per the YP constitution (a bureaucratic hurdle that HQ itself enforced on the organisation). No wonder Bellingham's counting was rather 'creative'.

She explained that "the vast majority of members *should* be in a branch by end of summer/beginning of autumn". However, the branches listed on the YP website for launch in June and July is rather underwhelming, to put it mildly. A mere 21 branches are featured - among them such important centres of working class and leftwing strength as Bangor Conwy Môn, Ceredigion Penfro, Wolverhampton, Stoke on Trent and Dover. You get the drift.

Not a single branch in London is listed, despite the largest number of members living there. Nothing in Manchester, Liverpool or Glasgow. In Yorkshire and the Humber, one of the most active regions in Your Party, only one branch will be launched - Hull. There are no plans yet for Sheffield, Leeds, York or Bradford, despite the fact that they all have at least similar numbers of members as Hull (with Sheffield and Leeds having three times as many!).

We hear that when GL supporters asked how the branches were chosen, they were told that the conscious focus was on "smaller places that often get left behind, because we want to do things differently". It is different all right - and rather unusual - to ignore the *majority* of members.

The real reason is all too obvious: control. Larger branches are likely to contain more revolutionaries and 'trouble-makers', who might not simply accept that, for example,

officers are elected online outside a meeting, as happened on the Isle of Wight. Or that the branches “will not operate in the old familiar model”, as it states on the YP website: “Many people have too much experience of torturous branch meetings that turn into endless arguments between a few key players over the wording of motions, with little impact on the world outside. It drains the life out of you.”³

The YP alternative is “assemblies”: gatherings which *anybody* can attend, where no votes are taken and nothing is decided - apart from “supporting the campaigns and struggles already happening on the ground where you live”. Doesn’t that just sound super-exciting?

No doubt, another reason for the delay is the hope that most leftwingers will have left YP by the time their local branch launches. And indeed, most left organisations have already departed, among them the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party in England and Wales, Counterfire, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the *Morning Star’s* Communist Party of Britain (which was not really involved in the first place). More on that below.

To make matters even more difficult for the branches, treasurer Fadel Takroui announced that, “as required by the electoral commission”, Your Party will have “to amend our constitution and financial scheme”, because both are based on a “unitary structure”, but the commission requires “autonomous branches”. This is not true. Your Party could have chosen to submit one set of financial accounts, for HQ and the branches, which is what most political parties do. Instead, YP HQ has voluntarily chosen to split the party’s finances into “separate accounting units”.

This arrangement goes some way to make YP less of a party and more the kind network that Corbyn envisaged all along (had he not been bounced into launching a party by Zarah Sultana). It will also make life for branches a lot harder, which is no doubt why it has been chosen: “It was agreed that no branch should receive or control funds until spending limits, reporting rules, training and internal controls are agreed”, as it says in the officers’ report.

There will now be an “interim arrangement”, during which branches have to apply to the CEC (specifically a small group made up of Takroui, Maria Donnellan and Hannah Hawkins) to have “permissible expenses” reimbursed - this could “last up to a year”. When GL supporters asked about what would, for example, constitute “permissible expenses”, they were fobbed off with yet “another report” that will be written and decided upon elsewhere.

In other words, branches will, of course, not be really autonomous, but tightly controlled by Corbyn’s leadership faction. GL supporters on the CEC voted in favour of this arrangement, apart from Sophie Wilson, who abstained.

Last item

The last item on the agenda - a discussion on the “trade unions and working people ‘commission’”, which was scheduled to last 20 minutes - seem to have simply been forgotten after Corbyn joined the meeting halfway through, giving one of his long and unfocused sermons, which was followed by equally waffly contributions from other CEC members. The CEC really is nothing but a charade.

Despite all of that, the CPGB argues that socialists should for the moment continue to use YP as an arena to fight for the kind of party we actually need - just like we should engage in trade unions and, where possible, the Labour Party. If we are kicked out, so be it - but, where we can

engage with thousands of socialists and working class activists, we should and will do so.

Most of the left, however, has now withdrawn from YP: the SWP is back to doing its usual ‘broad front’ stuff - currently it is the campaign, Together (with the Greens, Labour left and centrists), against the far right. The RCP seems to have sent people into the Green Party, while SPEW has launched Trade Unionists for a New Party, which it rather cheekily claims was “launched at a thousand-plus strong meeting in July last year”.⁴ The reason that so many people attended was because Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana were among the speakers - and there was no mention of such a campaign. We very much doubt this new campaign will go beyond SPEW’s spectacularly unsuccessful Tusc electoral front. Why? This new Party is just as limited politically as Tusc and organisationally the comrades are still pursuing a party with a “federal structure.” Worse, affiliates such as themselves and trade union bureaucrats would have a guaranteed veto. A total dead end.

Then there is the Socialist Federation, which was set up on May 31 in a Zoom meeting. In a rather strange turn of events, *The Guardian* has picked up on the small gathering - despite author Zoe Williams not having been present nor being in possession of any great knowledge about the British left. It appears she simply copied an equally ill-informed article in the *New Statesman* - and did not even bother to try and contact the organisers of the federation. Take the very first sentence of her ‘article’: “Last weekend, Your Party officially split, with 250 members voting to start a second leftwing party, the Socialist Federation.”⁵

Wrong, wrong and wrong again. There was a maximum of 120 people present at any one time - and just over 70 voted in favour of setting up a federation. It did not “split” and it did not commit to setting up a new party. But then, Williams does not really care about this meeting, which she uses as a cheap intro into her real target: the

Connections lead statement

We believe:

- 1) That there is a burning necessity to build an independent, working class, socialist political alternative, rooted in the struggle and self-organisation of workers and the oppressed.
- 2) That the hundreds of Your Party proto-branches and independent socialist groups that have been built across England, Scotland and Wales during the recent period point towards the potential strength of such a party.
- 3) That YP’s ruling bureaucracy, with the support of a majority of its central executive committee, is squandering an historic opportunity. This has included, but is not limited to: a refusal to recognise and establish a democratic branch structure; a failure to seriously contest the May 2026 elections; a disregard for the national and democratic rights of members in Scotland and Wales; the banning of organised socialist groups; and an inadequate and undemocratic launch conference, in which central debates could not take place. Among other things, this has prevented the party from discussing and developing a serious programme that could fight for the kind of internationalist, socialist, anti-capitalist political alternative we so desperately need.
- 4) That the above has already led to the departure of many individuals and numerous proto-branches from Your Party, and the entire Scottish leadership of YP.

We want to:

- 5) Continue to build ‘Connections’ as an alliance of local independent socialist groups and YP proto-

‘stupid left’, which just cannot get its act together and keeps on splitting, for no discernible reason. For her, this latest ‘split’

looks like two things: first, a question of who, between the rivals and their hench people, deserves the blame for being so monumentally difficult as personalities that they squandered the goodwill (and data, and crowdfunding potential) of nearly a million people; second, the leftist infighting that onlookers have been mocking since the People’s Front of Judea and the Judean People’s Front.

Amazing really that nobody has used that old Monty Python joke before Williams. Oh wait ...! In reality, she says, the “political sticking points for Your Party - trans rights and the language around Israel and Gaza - read like they were handed to them by an antagonistic interviewer. They are issues upon which views diverge, but it should be possible for individuals to work out a common ground, rather than splitting into two parties.”

We agree with her last point - in theory. Of course, we need a party that can contain - and openly debate - different viewpoints. But in reality, this has absolutely nothing to do with why Your Party has failed. There are only slight political differences, with Sultana having moved to the left of Corbyn somewhat. These minor differences never really came to the fore and they certainly did not cause YP to implode.

The *real* issue was that Corbyn never wanted to set up a party in the first place. He had been resisting for close to two years. He is a thorough Labourite, currently in exile, and would be all too happy to rejoin Labour (if, for example, Andy Burnham becomes the new leader and offers him the chance). He was bounced into launching a party by Zarah Sultana. In fact, he is still trying to prevent YP becoming a real party, as he wants nothing more than a docile network - that is what the slow and bureaucratic branch rollout, the lash-ups with

‘independent’ groups and the focus on assemblies is all about. Ditto of course the micro-management of the launch conference, the witch-hunt against the organised left, the online referendums and the bureaucratic control over every aspect of the organisation. YP is not supposed to become anything real beyond a (possibly temporary) cushy retirement number for one Jeremy Corbyn, who can continue to travel the world, hobnobbing with other ‘socialist leaders’.

Back to the Socialist Federation. Despite the name, there are no local groups or campaigns involved and the 70 individuals in the meeting represent about 170 different political viewpoints! There were an incredible 32 *written proposals*, some very long and cumbersome. There was no time to discuss political differences or to even try to find out what those differences might be. No political clarity was achieved - it was not even an aim of the meeting, which simply rushed through the vastly differing proposals, produced by people with vastly different political backgrounds. Motions won when the speaker introducing them was particularly nice, particularly loud or known to the participants. There will now be an attempt to “composite” the three most popular proposals from both sections, on ‘structure’ and ‘programme’. What can possibly go wrong?

This is how a report by the Democratic Socialists sums up one of the key problems:

What was not resolved is the question of what a programme’s purpose and structure should be, with Raz O’Connor’s proposal, for instance, appearing to endorse the idea that a programme is essentially a series of theoretical interpretations of Marxism, while Richard Gerrard’s proposal, though clearly indicating the need for socialism, largely emphasising more immediate agitational demands over a longer-term strategic horizon for working class power.⁶

a socialist challenge in the 2027 local elections.

- 11) If successful, such steps could help to prepare the ground for the building of the kind of member-led party we actually need: with a clear programme for socialism (ie, a classless society, in which production is for need, not private profit, with a planned economy in place of the market and private ownership), transparency, openness, accountability and thorough-going democracy.
- 12) The conference should be a space for open and democratic debate, reflective of the need for a culture where differences are not brushed under the carpet, but are openly debated and discussed, in front of the working class.
- 13) To hold report-back meetings in our local groups to discuss the outcome of the convention, and propose endorsement of this motion to those meetings ●

Second statement

This convention agrees to encourage local socialists to build an open meeting to organise against the coming anti-cost of living crisis and prepare to resist it, aiming to unite the left, local unionists and community campaigners, including tenants and renters groups, as well as those of the oppressed. This could lay the basis for a national anti-crisis assembly in future months that could outline an emergency plan to make the bosses pay, not us, and put it into action ●

The next meeting takes place on June 28. We predict it will fizzle out pretty quickly. While there are a number of good comrades involved, this method of organising - brushing politics and differences under the carpet - is very unlikely to succeed.

Connections

The ‘Connections convention’, which took place on Saturday June 6, started off on a slightly better basis. It was originally set up as a network for elected representatives of around 100 Your Party proto-branches, but it now also accepts groups who have left YP. Some 150 travelled to Sheffield, with a few dozen more joining via Zoom. It certainly is a much better political experience to be physically in the same room with one another and comrades certainly made a few useful new ‘connections’.

Politically though, it is still as nebulous as the Socialist Federation (and some will have attended both). Yes, there were two interesting enough panel discussions, with the final one agreeing to an uncontroversial and broadly supportable ‘lead statement’ (see below), which seeks to

prepare the ground for the building of the kind of member-led party we actually need: with a clear programme for socialism, transparency, openness, accountability and thorough-going democracy. The conference [in 2026-27] should be a space for open and democratic debate, reflective of the need for a culture where differences are not brushed under the carpet, but are openly debated and discussed, in front of the working class.⁷

But most of the day’s focus was on ‘workshops’, which set out to have no specific outcome (and certainly delivered on that). Thanks to pressure from some of the Marxist groups involved, however, there was also a range of ‘self-organised spaces’, and CPGB members and supporters participated in three interesting joint sessions with the Democratic Socialists (which incidentally has finally adopted a proper membership structure⁸).

In the first session, Mike Macnair, Jon Benson (DS) and Claire Laker (Socialist Alternative) discussed the question of ‘What kind of programme’, which might not have produced a joint political outlook, but certainly served as an important step forward in at least *understanding* each other. In the second session, Yasmine Mather looked at ‘The world on fire: imperialism today’, with an interesting exploration of the situation in the Middle East, “which must be seen through the lens of the decline of the US imperialism and the rise of China”, as she explained.

The meeting also hosted the launch of the Socialist Education and Debating Association (Seda), which has the potential to become a useful avenue for comrades from different political backgrounds to openly discuss and debate various issues, including contentious questions - that would be a much needed step forward for the left. The videos will be uploaded later in the week ●

Notes

1. weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1577/we-need-light-and-air.
2. x.com/BanburyUK/status/2063549123081449948.
3. www.yourparty.uk/branches.
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FOOTBALL



Beautiful game, ugly bans

It is clear that America is in charge. Fans and officials from more than a quarter of the countries participating in the World Cup face ticket cancellations, visa rejections and debilitating restrictions. So much for the internationalism of FIFA and the sporting spirit, writes **Carl Collins**

With the Iranian squad only allowed to enter the United States on the day of its matches, we now learn that members of its support staff have been denied visas. This includes “a large portion of the managerial and executive staff, technical advisers, and others who are an integral part of any national football team” according to the Iranian authorities. Some dozen people in total.

Already Iran has found its entire ticket allocation for supporters cancelled and, of course, Iran is not the only country on the receiving end of US restrictions and bans. We all know about the South African team, Brael Embolo’s troubles and that Somalian referee, Omar Artan.

FIFA and football’s other governing bodies present the ‘beautiful game’ as a unifying force that transcends borders and politics, yet the visa disputes demonstrate how the movement of human beings remains subject to the interests of states, hierarchies of global power and the selective openness of the modern world.

Although we have become accustomed to Donald Trump’s theatrical - often apparently absurd - posturing on the stage of international diplomacy, the significance of these restrictions extends far beyond the latest episode in US-Iranian tensions. The controversy raises broader questions about who is free to move in the modern world, who controls that movement, and whether global sport can genuinely claim to transcend

politics, when its most prestigious competitions remain subject to the logic of geopolitical power.

From a Marxist perspective, the issue is not simply one of inconsistency or hypocrisy. In the abstract, capitalism depends upon the international mobility of capital, investment and commodities (an ideal promoted by the likes of Adam Smith, but noticeably violated by rising powers such as late 19th century America and Germany). Meanwhile, especially in the age of universal suffrage and the so-called welfare state, the movement of labour tends to be restricted, controlled ... and instrumentalised by a conservative right that needs the votes of the *hoi polloi*.

Prehistory

As a global capitalist industry, modern football is dependent upon an international market of players. Not the case historically. Note, the English Football Association effectively banned foreign professionals in 1930 by imposing a strict two-year residential requirement on them. Labour minister, Margaret Bondfield, Britain’s first female cabinet minister, announced the measure in the midst of the Great Depression in the name of protecting British jobs for British football players. The FA agreed, stating that it was “not in favour of granting permission to alien players to be brought into this country.”

A year later, in 1931, the International Football Association Board, made up of the four ‘home

Team Great Britain won the gold medal at the 1908 Olympic Games

In 1931 players not born in Britain were barred from the professional game in the ‘home countries’

nations’ - and the effective rule-makers of the game - went even further and wrote the ban into law: “A professional player who is not a British born subject is not eligible to take part in any competition under the jurisdiction of the Association unless he possesses two years residential qualification within the jurisdiction of this Association”. This came in the wake of anti-immigration legislation in 1905 and 1914 and was therefore part of a bigger picture.

Not that there were big numbers of foreign players in the English league. Gordon Hodgson, Walter Bowam, Niles Middleboe and Max Seeburg come to mind. They were not born in Britain ... but were very much the exception.

Interestingly, the most famous player who fell victim to the restrictive practices was Rudolf ‘Rudi’ Hiden, the Austrian international goalkeeper. Hiden had starred for the Austrian national team which had drawn 0-0 with England in May 1930 in front of 55,000 Austrian supporters in Vienna. A stunning result for English football which regarded itself as the only country that could effectively play the game (English managers were highly rated and did much to spread football internationally).

Hiden tended to use his feet and was completely unused to the English habit of barging the goalkeeper - something frowned upon on the continent. However, he was quick, athletic ... and displayed the sportsmanship expected at the time by English managers, teams and crowds.

Arsenal manager, Herbert Chapman, offered Hiden’s club, Weiner AC, £2,500 for him - a fortune at the time. However, the transfer never went through. Hiden found himself barred by immigration officials at Dover after they had consulted the Department of Labour. They insisted that Hiden had no right to work in Britain. Hiden had been a baker by trade in his native Vienna, and apparently Arsenal had gone so far as to arrange a job for him as a chef in London, while also being paid on the books by Arsenal. This cut no ice with the immigration officials, and his move to Arsenal never happened.

Hiden, however, did get his move abroad, winning a league and cup with French side, Racing Club de Paris, in the 30s. He was also part of the Austrian side that trounced Scotland 5-0 in Vienna less than a year after his Arsenal debacle.¹

The restriction was finally lifted in 1978, following legal challenges facilitated by the UK joining the European Economic Community. Member states were expected to allow the free movement of labour. Nonetheless, despite that, there are still restrictions in force: eg, teams are meant to have a certain number of ‘homegrown’ players (a minimum of eight out of a squad of 25).

Geopolitical

When it comes to the World Cup, the official US justification for the visa refusals mainly rests on ‘national security’ concerns. US authorities possess broad discretionary powers

to deny entry to foreign nationals, particularly those from countries regarded as adversaries. Under section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, for example, the president may suspend or restrict the entry of non-citizens deemed “detrimental to US interests”.²

Of course, this not only plays into Trump’s chauvinistic playbook. It makes a mockery of FIFA’s commitment to internationalism and its claim to champion fair play. Excluding physiotherapists, coaches and analysts can only but effect performance. Their absence must have direct sporting consequences.

Major tournaments are also important sites of elite networking and diplomacy within the modern game. Football Association officials attend FIFA functions, meet counterparts from other federations, discuss future cooperation and represent their organisations within football’s governing structures. Exclusion therefore carries consequences beyond the pitch, limiting participation in the wider institutional relationships that increasingly shape the sport.

The restrictions imposed upon Iran extend far beyond the refusal of visas to a dozen members of its delegation. The US-imposed conditions on the team itself are unprecedented in World Cup history. Rather than establishing a training base within the *main* host country, Iran has been forced to prepare in Tijuana, Mexico.

Given that Iran’s three group matches see them kick-off against New Zealand in Los Angeles, this is a huge problem. They will have to fly in on the day and then leave the country within 24 hours. The same goes for their two other games. Six days after Los Angeles, Iran is due once again in California, this time to play Belgium, and their last qualifying game is against Egypt in Seattle ... with the possibility of more games if they make it to the knockouts. Exhausting.

The practical consequences are considerable. Modern international football is organised around carefully managed preparation schedules. World Cup teams would ordinarily arrive in host cities well in advance of fixtures and complete final preparations under stable conditions. Iran, by contrast, will play with a politically imposed handicap. A symbol of broader geopolitical conflict.

Three countries

The 2026 World Cup, hosted jointly by the United States, Canada and Mexico, was always likely to encounter geopolitical complications. FIFA’s expansion of the tournament to 48 teams was presented as a celebration of football’s global reach. More nations would participate than ever before; more supporters would travel; more cultures would be represented.

Yet more than a quarter of the countries participating in the tournament face travel bans, heightened restrictions or unusually high visa rejection rates. The issue extends well beyond Iran. Supporters from across Africa, Asia and parts of the Middle East face barriers that many fans from wealthier western states do not encounter. As Julien Kouadio Adonis of the Ivory Coast supporters’ association asked, “No European country has faced this kind of restriction, so why Africa?”

His question points towards a reality often obscured by official rhetoric. Access to mobility is distributed unequally across the global order. Citizens of powerful states generally encounter fewer restrictions than those positioned lower within the international hierarchy. The geography of visa controls mirrors broader inequalities produced by colonialism, imperialism and uneven economic development.

Awarding hosting rights to states that retain sovereign control over immigration policy inevitably creates tensions between FIFA’s rhetoric and the realities of state power. While football presents itself as a universal game, it operates within a world system shaped by capitalist competition, geopolitical struggle and imperialist rivalry. The same global order that encourages the movement of money, investment and commercial activity continues to restrict the movement of people.

Host governments normally sign agreements facilitating entry for players, officials and media. These arrangements, however, derive from state authority, not FIFA. The organisation can regulate player registrations and disciplinary procedures, but it cannot compel sovereign states to issue visas.

Consequently, when US officials claim they will not allow the Iranian delegation to exploit the tournament to enter the country under false pretences, FIFA possesses no meaningful power to intervene. The dispute ultimately reflects the balance of forces between states rather than the wishes of football’s governing institutions.

The US has maintained extensive sanctions against Iran for decades. Successive administrations, Republican and Democrat alike, have treated Iran as a strategic adversary in the Middle East. Against that backdrop, the idea that sporting participants could somehow exist outside broader geopolitical conflict was always an illusion.

This is also why the controversy cannot be understood simply as a disagreement between Washington and Tehran. It is a product of geopolitical struggle between states and, more broadly, the rivalries and interventions of imperialist powers. Individuals become caught within conflicts they neither initiated nor control, their freedom of movement determined by strategic calculations made elsewhere. The issue is not fundamentally about football administration or even security. It is about the way global capitalism and the state system organise mobility according to political and economic interests.

FIFA frequently insists that football should remain separate from politics. But this claim has always been highly selective. Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Russian clubs and national teams were rapidly suspended from FIFA and UEFA competitions. Yet, despite growing international criticism of Israel’s conduct in Gaza and repeated calls for comparable measures, Israel continues to participate normally within international football structures. Decisions presented as neutral sporting administration inevitably reflect existing political power.

Of course, Israel was officially eliminated during the UEFA qualification stages. They competed in Group I against Norway, Italy, Estonia, and Moldova, finishing third and missing out on both the direct qualification spots and the playoffs. Israel plays as a European team simply because it is unwelcome in the Middle East and North African region (represented by eight teams: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia). If it had got through, it would have been a real nightmare for FIFA. One can imagine calls for boycotts and, failing that, huge crowd protests, especially in Mexico. At the same time FIFA has been doing everything it can to ingratiate itself with Donald Trump. Late last year Gianni Infantino awarded him the ‘FIFA Peace Prize - Football Unites the World.’ A second-rate substitute for failing to get the Nobel Peace Prize.



Cristiano Ronaldo: world’s highest grossing player

The claim that football ‘unites the world’ and transcends politics therefore means something much narrower: that certain political questions should not interfere with the smooth operation of football’s commercial machinery.

That becomes even clearer, when considering football as an industry that generates revenues of between \$50 and \$60 billion, what with the international markets in advertising, merchandise, broadcasting rights and transfers. Players, of course, move across continents. Whether or not the buying and selling of players can be called a ‘labour market’ is a moot point. At the lowest level, maybe. But at the top we are dealing with multimillionaires who live a film star life. They are their own businesses/merchants in their own right and can generate incomes of between \$40m and \$300m annually from combined salaries, bonuses, and commercial endorsements.

Eg, Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr), \$235m playing contract, \$65m endorsements; Lionel Messi (Inter Miami), \$70m salary/club revenue cut, \$70m endorsements; Karim Benzema (Al-Ittihad), \$100m salary, \$4m endorsements; Kylian Mbappé (Real Madrid), \$70m salary, \$25m endorsements; Erling Haaland (Manchester City), \$60m salary, \$20m endorsements; Vinicius Júnior (Real Madrid), \$40m salary, \$20m endorsements; Mohamed Salah (Liverpool) \$35m salary, \$20m endorsements; Sadio Mané (Al-Nassr), \$50m salary, \$4m endorsements; Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid), \$29m salary, \$15m endorsements; Lamine Yamal (Barcelona), \$33m salary, \$10m endorsements.

It is hard to regard such people as members of the working class who sell

their labour power. It is the same with coaches: Diego Simeone (Atlético Madrid), \$33.5-37m; Pep Guardiola (Manchester City), \$23.8-26.8m; Mikel Arteta (Arsenal), \$15-20.2m; Carlo Ancelotti (Real Madrid/Brazil NT), \$10.7-11.3m. Top coaches often work far from their countries of birth. Scouts, analysts and medical staff circulate internationally too. And, of course, football’s governing bodies celebrate this mobility as evidence of the sport’s international character.

Free movement

Yet that freedom proves remarkably conditional. The globalisation of capital has never been matched by a comparable freedom for workers. Capital requires access to international markets, resources and labour, but states retain extensive powers to regulate the movement of human beings. The result is a system in which mobility is encouraged when it facilitates accumulation and restricted when it conflicts with political or strategic interests.

When wealthy European clubs recruit talent from Africa or South America, football celebrates globalisation. When billionaire owners move capital across borders to acquire clubs, football applauds international investment. But when tensions emerge between states, supposedly universal principles of openness quickly give way to border controls, security concerns and diplomatic calculations.

This reveals a deeper truth about freedom of movement under capitalism. Contrary to the rhetoric of globalisation, people do not move freely. Movement is organised according to power, wealth and political interest.

The same governments that speak enthusiastically about open markets often impose increasingly restrictive

immigration controls on workers, refugees and the poor. A billionaire can purchase property abroad, acquire residency rights through investment schemes and travel internationally with relative ease. Transnational corporations move money around the globe at the touch of a button. Migrants fleeing poverty, war or climate catastrophe encounter walls, detention centres, deportations, hostile bureaucracies ... and xenophobic hate campaigns.

What appears as a defence of borders is therefore better understood as a form of chauvinism that accepts mobility for the powerful, while denying it to those with less wealth, fewer opportunities or the misfortune of being born in the ‘wrong place’.

Football also occasionally exposes the arbitrary nature of these restrictions. Following the collapse of the Afghan government in 2021, a number of Afghan footballers and athletes used opportunities created through international sporting networks to seek asylum abroad. Football provided access to forms of mobility and protection unavailable to millions of other Afghans facing similar dangers. Their movement was not granted according to any universal right, but because of their connection to an internationally recognised institution.

The visa restrictions imposed upon Iranian staff expose another dimension of the same phenomenon. Here the issue is not class in the narrow economic sense, but geopolitical hierarchy. Access to movement is determined not simply by wealth, but by the relationship between states within the global order. Citizens of powerful allied countries generally encounter fewer obstacles. Citizens of states designated as adversaries encounter more.

Divided by borders

The idea of an Iranian physiotherapist as a potential terrorist mastermind is more than merely ridiculous. The absurdity lies not simply in the allegation, but in the assumptions that make such decisions possible. Somewhere within the machinery of modern geopolitics, a man whose primary occupation may involve treating hamstring injuries (although, say, the Iranian physiotherapist is actually a very experienced, highly qualified professional) becomes a ‘security concern’ - not because of anything he has done, but because he belongs to the wrong nation at the wrong moment in history.

If football genuinely belongs to the world, participation cannot depend upon the shifting strategic priorities of powerful states, chauvinism, nationalism or class interest. If international sport is to represent something more than a commercial spectacle, it must confront the realities of exclusion that continue to shape the movement of people across borders.

The refusal of visas to Iranian support staff, and the extraordinary restrictions imposed upon the team itself, do not merely affect one participant state. They expose the fragility of the universal ideals football’s governing institutions so frequently invoke. The World Cup is often described as a ‘celebration of humanity, united through sport’. The Iranian controversy serves as a reminder that humanity remains divided by borders, power and unequal access to movement.

Until those realities are addressed, the promise that football transcends politics will remain precisely that: a promise rather than a fact ●

Notes

1. abohemiansportinglife.com/2018/10/31/legal-alien-foreign-footballers-in-early-20th-century-britain.
2. ‘Understanding INA’, section 212(f). ‘The president’s authority to suspend the entry of migrants’ - American Immigration Council.

HEALTH

Immunising the world

Some experts are saying the latest outbreak could be at least as bad as 2014. But, says **James Linney**, Ebola could be eradicated with sufficient resources and basic disease management



Illustration of safe burial practice: the virus can survive for days within body fluids

It has been six weeks since the first death that alerted authorities to the current outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), which continues to spread alarmingly through the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

On April 24, in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province in northeastern Congo, a health worker became unwell with a severe infectious disease, with symptoms highly suggestive of Ebola, including severe bleeding. He died on April 27 and soon his close contacts started developing similar symptoms. The local health clinic only had access to diagnostic tests for the more common Zaire strain of Ebola and the tests all came back negative. It took another two weeks and the samples being sent off to the DRC's capital city, Kinshasa, where more extensive testing was available, before health authorities established that the rarer Bundibugyo species of Ebola was responsible for the death.

By this time many more people in the region had become unwell and on May 11 there was a confirmed case affecting a Congolese man in Kampala, the capital of neighbouring Uganda; worryingly he had travelled the 434 miles from Ituri overland,

infected an unknown number of people on the way.

At the time of writing there have been 550 cases and 101 deaths in the DRC, and 19 cases and two deaths in Uganda, but these are only the laboratory-confirmed cases: there are likely thousands more. The outbreak may no longer be leading the headlines, but the situation, which the World Health Organisation is calling "a public health emergency of international concern", is still extremely dangerous. It is likely that, when this outbreak finally gets under control (which may take many more months), thousands more people will have died.

Six species

The current outbreak is already the third worst recorded since the disease was first recognised in 1976. Since then six distinct species of the Ebola genus (the Filoviridae family) have been identified. Four of these are known to cause Ebola Virus Disease in humans: the Zaire species (this is the most common and the one responsible for the outbreak in 2014 in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which led to 11,308 reported deaths), plus the Sudan, Tai Forest and Bundibugyo viruses.

I will make no bones about it: Ebola is a truly terrible infection

to contract. Symptoms start innocuously, with body aches, fatigue, fever and headaches, but within a few days they can progress to severe diarrhoea and vomiting. The virus attacks and kills cells, causing multi-organ failure. As it progresses, it causes damage to the endothelial cells that line the blood vessels - hence at the end stage of the illness people commonly experience bleeding both internally and externally, which is why it is known as haemorrhagic fever. The mortality rates of all species are devastatingly high, the Zaire virus being the highest, killing as many as 90% of those infected, while the Bundibugyo virus, which is responsible for the current outbreak, has a mortality rate of around 30%-50%.

There are a couple of things about Ebola that we can be thankful for. Firstly, it is passed from one person to another through contact with bodily fluids (blood, sweat, vomit, saliva or semen) rather than the much more contagious infections, like flu or Covid, that are airborne. Secondly, again unlike, for instance, flu, Ebola is not infectious during its two-week incubation period, so can only be passed on once a carrier develops symptoms. It tends to be less contagious in the first few days after symptoms develop,

but much more so towards the end of the illness and there is an especially high risk of spread by coming into contact with the dead bodies of victims. This is why traditional funeral practices in the Congo region, which involve close contact with and washing of the body by family members, can cause huge spreading.

As of yet there are no known specific treatments for EVD, although early and intensive hospital treatment can make a difference between survival and death. Since 2014 there is now an effective vaccine for the Zaire species, found to provide 84% protection.¹ Sadly, however, this vaccine does not give protection against the Bundibugyo species. There are some candidate vaccines for this species currently in development, but these are unlikely to be ready for several months. However, treating patients is only one part of controlling Ebola. Understanding where the virus comes from and what drives its spread is equally important if future outbreaks are to be prevented.

Ebola is zoonotic - meaning it is transmitted to humans from other animals which act as host reservoirs. It can infect other mammals, including primates (Ebola has possibly killed as many as a third of Africa's

gorillas²), but it is believed to be transmitted to humans when the virus 'spills over' from bat carriers. The world's largest fruit bat population is located in the tropical rainforests and savannahs of central and west Africa, making these Ebola hotspots.

There has been a definite increase in these 'spillover events' in the past couple of decades, with an Ebola outbreak at least every couple of years, as well as other zoonotic viruses, such as Avian influenza, Mpox, Nipah, Marburg, Hantavirus - and, of course, Covid-19. It is thought the process of human geographic expansion, urbanisation and deforestation is the driver behind these increasing events, as dense human populations come into closer contact with wild animals.

Natural resources

This process is accelerating in areas like the DRC because of the rush by foreign players for its natural resources; the Congo has vast deposits of so-called 'conflict minerals', 70% of the world's cobalt reserves and massive deposits of copper, coltan and lithium. These minerals are foundational to the global energy transition, smart phones, laptops and lithium-ion batteries that power electric vehicles and consumer electronics. The

likes of Apple, Dell, Google, Microsoft and Tesla have vested interests in the mining industry here. Workers face abysmal conditions and children as young as six are routinely employed.³ The strategic importance of these resources means that economic interests in the region extend far beyond mining companies alone.

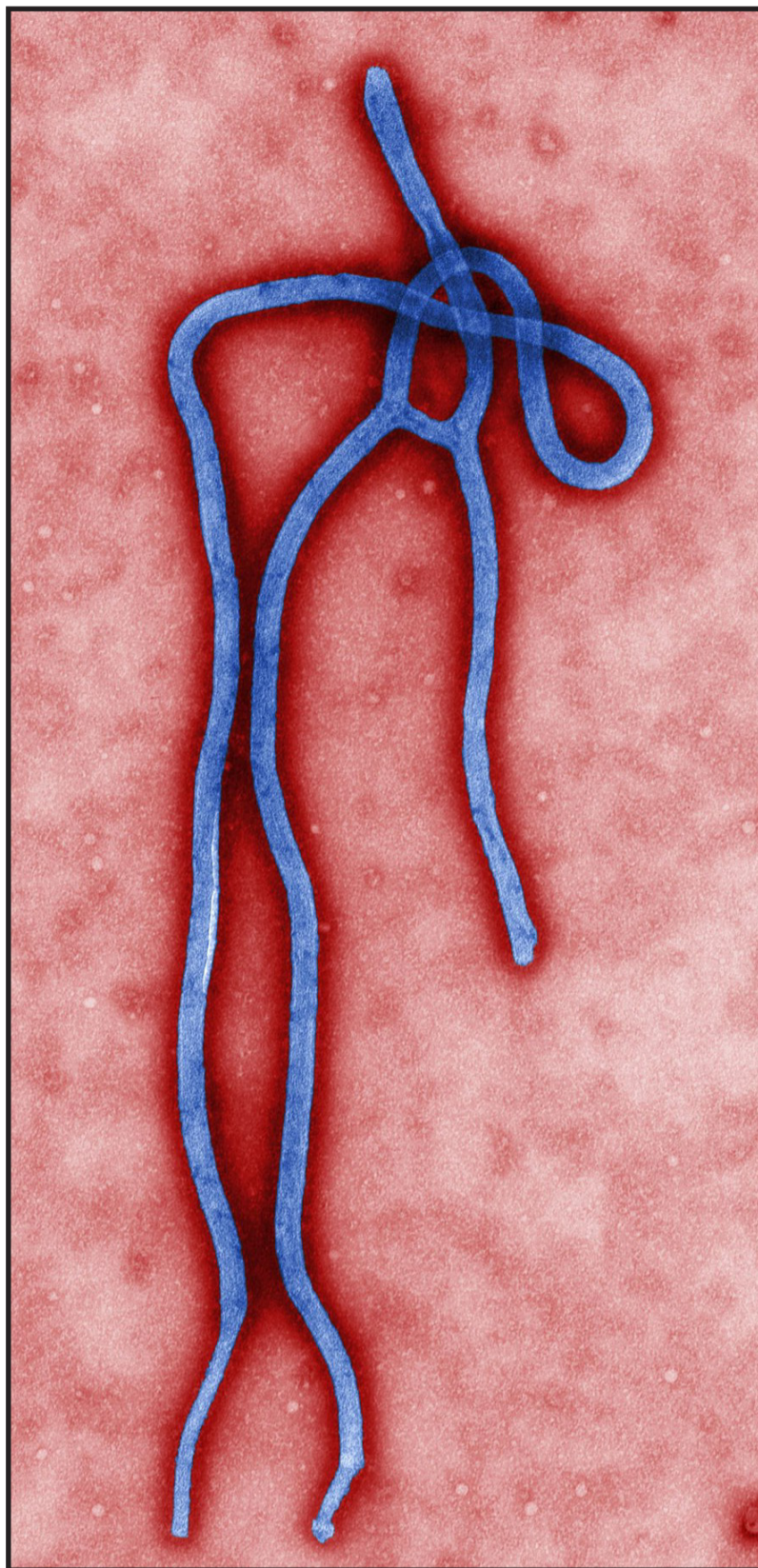
The US and China are engaged in competition for influence in the DRC and neighbouring states. At stake is access to vast mineral reserves and the political influence that comes with controlling supply chains so critical to the global economy. To get one over on China, towards the end of last year, Trump hosted DRC and Rwanda leaders for a 'peace deal' - soon after which, by coincidence, US-based Virtus Minerals finalised a \$700 million acquisition of the Congolese mining company, Chemaf, including the Etoile and Mutoshi mines in Katanga, southern DRC, which together account for roughly 5% of global cobalt production.⁴

As its natural resources continue to be exploited and shipped abroad for the benefit of global capitalists, to the score of trillions of dollars, the DRC's people live in dire poverty, often lacking clean water and basic sanitation. Access to healthcare and hospitals is scattered and severely lacking - almost non-existent in more remote areas - allowing infectious diseases such as Ebola to spread unchecked long before being identified. The WHO recently confirmed that the first infections in the current outbreak are likely to have been back in January.⁵

The DRC's extreme inequality, poverty, corruption and ongoing warfare is a legacy of centuries of colonial interference and exploitation, from the slave trading of the 15th-18th centuries to the territorial conquests of the 19th century, Africa in general was plundered and its people killed or kept impoverished. During the 'scramble for Africa' the people of the Congo fared even worse than most African regions, being subjected to Belgium's King Leopold II, when he established the Congo Free State at the Berlin Conference in 1885. His barbaric reign over the region represented colonialism in its most racist and vicious form. The Congo's rubber and ivory enriched the Belgian bourgeoisie, whilst the population were *en masse* exploited, tortured and mutilated, with an estimated 10 million people murdered.⁶

Horrible history

Not surprisingly, when Belgium hastily granted independence to the Congo in 1960, the country was left in a dire, chaotic state - the kind of economic and political chaos that allows a strongman dictator to exploit. In this case it was army chief Joseph-Désiré Mobutu who seized power in a coup in 1965. Mobutu changed the country's name to Zaire and ruled until he was overthrown in 1997 by a rebel coalition led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who was being backed by Rwanda and Uganda. 1997-2003 saw a period of continuous devastating warfare and, although in 2006 the country held its first free elections, the modern political reality continues to be dominated by corruption, civil war and conflict. Currently the DRC government is in armed conflict with the M23 rebel group, which holds power in areas where the Ebola outbreak is live, making attempts to arrest the



Electron micrograph of Ebola virus

spread and treat those infected even more hazardous.

One consequence of the colonial past, and the years of war and corruption since, is the lack of trust the people of the DRC have for any authority - particularly foreign agencies who often swoop in at times of infectious disease outbreaks and just as quickly abandon them when the outbreak subsides. During recent Ebola outbreaks there have not surprisingly been some friction and clashes between the local population and medical teams - both native and foreign NGOs, who turn up to try and limit the virus.

This is made worse by the fact that those infected by Ebola are often placed in 'field hospitals', which, due to the lack of resources for the basic support treatment mentioned earlier, act basically as quarantine holding pens. Whilst quarantine is a fundamental part of managing an Ebola crisis, from the local population's point of view their loved ones are being taken from them to die in excruciating pain all alone. Of course, mistrust is not unique to outbreaks in Africa: similar ill-informed conspiracy theories and government mistrust was rife in the UK during the Covid pandemic, while idiotic anti-vaccine misinformation

persists today.

Dealing with an Ebola outbreak is an expensive undertaking, severely hampered by the fact that, each time there is an outbreak, the local health infrastructure is so inadequate that health workers are starting from scratch. EVD management requires specialised separate hospitals that can effectively quarantine and care for those infected humanely, whilst providing adequate personal protective equipment to protect health workers, who are at especially high risk from Ebola. PPE in the case of Ebola means more than just face masks, aprons and gloves: the virus is considered a 'class 4' (the highest class of risk) hazardous infection, requiring the most stringent biocontainment measures, such as airtight positive-pressure suits, independent air supplies, negative-pressure environments, strict air filtration and complete chemical decontamination upon exit. Also essential are adequate on-site diagnostics, human resources to contact-trace, support for families of those infected, education, public health campaigns, etc.

There are, however, less funds available than ever for managing this crisis. Since within days of taking office, Donald Trump had issued a series of executive orders

that included an immediate freeze on all US foreign assistance and the cancelling of 80% of its foreign aid projects worldwide. The majority of the staff at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were laid off and America simultaneously withdrew from the WHO. US aid was never an altruistic act: it always came with strings, such as the receiving country having to agree to hosting US military bases, allowing US companies market expansion or access to natural resources. But the lack of previously available US money and personnel is currently leading to further suffering and deaths.

One solution

How and when this current outbreak will end is hard to predict. Some health experts are saying it could be at least as bad as the 2014 outbreak.⁷ Trump's dismantling of the USAID did not cause the Ebola outbreak: the virus has been around infecting animals before *homo sapiens* ever existed. But it is absolutely certain that the withholding of funds and support has led to the current outbreak being able to go undetected for longer and to spread more widely. People have died in appalling ways as a direct effect.

But, as we have seen, the historical role of colonialism and the ongoing influence of imperialism is perpetuating corruption, warfare, poverty and suffering and this will without doubt lead to many more such outbreaks of Ebola and other infectious diseases - diseases which are within our current capabilities to at least effectively contain, if not completely eradicate. It would have been fairly straightforward for medical science to have previously produced vaccines to all species of Ebola, but the major pharmaceutical companies are not interested, because they would not provide big enough profit incentives.

Such future outbreaks are not guaranteed to be regional or containable. Ebola is a ribonucleic acid (RNA) virus, which replicates quickly and often with errors, meaning it has a high propensity towards mutation. If, for example, one of these mutations leads to Ebola becoming able to spread via air droplets, it would lead to a global pandemic that would make Covid-19 look tame ●

Notes

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What we fight for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Fuel on the fire

An important study shows that human-driven global warming is accelerating. As a consequence we will soon see the planet cross key tipping points, writes **Eddie Ford**

While generalised nuclear conflagration is the greatest immediate danger to human civilisation, the climate crisis poses a permanent threat, unless its very worst aspects are somehow ameliorated by drastic action. However, a recent study argues that the rate of global warming has risen sharply, not slowed down, thus bringing forward the various climate deadlines with potentially disastrous results for humanity.¹

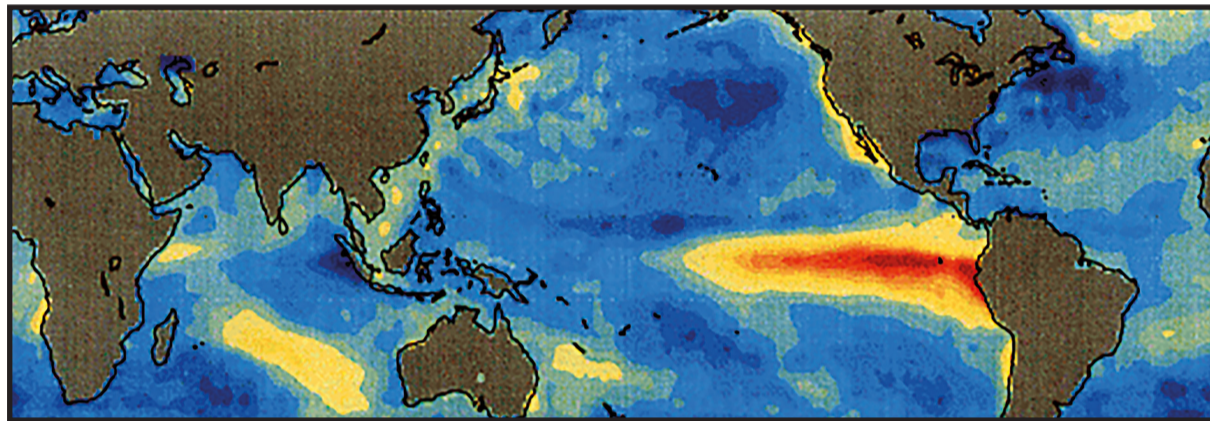
Hence the paper by Grant Foster and Stefan Rahmstorf of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, published in *Geophysical Research Letters* in March 2026, which locates warming at about 0.35°C per decade since 2015 - as opposed to an average of around 0.2°C per decade since the 1970s.² In other words, this is around *three-quarters higher*, with the paper's authors describing it as the fastest decadal warming since the instrumental record began in 1880. Of course, the significance is that, if this pace were to hold at the same rate, the world would pass 1.5°C of long-term warming - the central target (or limit) of the Paris Agreement - around 2030.

We should not be surprised, of course, seeing that 2024 was the hottest year on record. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, for instance, the global average surface temperature that year was 1.55°C above the 1850-1900 average - based on six international datasets that are used to reach the consolidated global figure.³ 2024 saw exceptional land and sea surface temperatures, and ocean heat, while the previous 10 years (2015-24) were the 10 warmest on record.

Noisy

Anyway, what did the study paper actually measure? Essentially, the raw temperature record is "noisy" - meaning that El Niño, La Niña, volcanic eruptions and the roughly 11-year solar cycle all push global temperatures up and down by amounts that are not necessarily to do with the overall long-term trend. What Foster and Rahmstorf did by using various methods was remove or subtract estimates of these three influences from five global temperature datasets, following an approach they first pioneered in 2011.

What was then left, they claim, makes the global temperature curve "less variable" and shows a statistically significant acceleration, beginning around 2015. The last point is the real substance, of course, as previous attempts to detect acceleration in global temperatures had not reached the 95% confidence threshold scientists usually need - at least when it comes to *climate science* - to treat something as truly significant or a reframing of the debate. Another recent paper co-authored by James Hansen, the US climatologist who publicly sounded the alarm back in the 1980s, also concluded global warming



Satellite-generated image of El Niño effect

is speeding up, although he did not do a statistical significance test. But the new paper says it has finally cleared that bar, once the short-term noise is stripped out, and naturally the peer-reviewed full paper by Foster and Rahmstorf lays out exactly the methodology they used.

Their summary points out that "warming proceeding faster is not unexpected by climate models", but it "shows how insufficient the efforts to slow and eventually stop global warming under the Paris Climate Accord have so far been" - which communists would regard as a massive understatement, given that the ruling class has done the very opposite of what is needed. Runaway climate change will inevitably start to exceed the ability of humans and ecosystems to adapt, if left unchecked.

Although not involved in the research, Katharine Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist at Texas Tech University, calls the study's methodology "careful and meticulous".⁴ She compares the atmosphere to a swimming pool, where the water is equivalent to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and humans have essentially stuck a hose into the pool and every year been turning up the faucet - so the water is rising faster and faster. In a nutshell, she writes, Foster and Rahmstorf in this study are "finally detecting what scientists have long predicted". In broad agreement is Claudie Beaulieu, an Ocean and Earth sciences assistant professor at the University of California, saying it was a sign of the study's accuracy that all five data sets showed an acceleration of warming, but pointed to possible limitations - particularly at how effective the scientists actually were in removing the influence of El Niño, volcanic eruptions and solar changes. For Beaulieu, continued monitoring will be essential to determine if this is "a genuine and lasting shift, or a transient feature of natural variability".

Debate

Given that this is a scientific debate, not a dogmatic one, there is no settled consensus, but different and contending points of view. There are those, it goes without saying, who argue that the underlying warming rate has not changed at all. Much of

the disagreement, it seems, goes back to a single awkward year, 2023 - that registered at about 1.45°C above pre-industrial levels - far enough above the previous record that, even when you combine El Niño and steady greenhouse warming together, it still struggles to account for the size of the jump. One possible explanation put forward by a group of scientists in the *Science* journal is a record-low planetary albedo - ie, the share of incoming sunlight Earth reflects back to space - driven mainly by a decline in low cloud cover over parts of the tropics and northern mid-latitudes.⁵ Now, whether that cloud loss is a passing fluctuation, a consequence of the aerosol cuts or a feedback from warming itself has not yet been resolved.

Regardless of the albedo debate, Michael Mann, a climate scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, has challenged the Foster and Rahmstorf thesis. He thinks there is no evidence of acceleration over the past 10 years, but rather that the recent run of record years is down to something more specific: a drop in industrial aerosol pollution, particularly sulphur, that had been *masking* part of the warming greenhouse gases were already producing. Therefore, by this argumentation, the planet is warming at a roughly constant rate until carbon emissions reach net zero - which is bad enough on its own, he adds. This is not something peculiar to Mann, it has to be said, but a well-documented phenomenon. Simply put, sulphate aerosols reflect sunlight directly and help seed bright, reflective, low clouds, so cutting them removes a cooling effect rather than adding a fresh source of heat.

We can see this most clearly with shipping. In 2020 there was a public-health measure aimed at cutting air pollution, which saw the International Maritime Organisation sharply lowering the permitted sulphur content of marine fuel - causing sulphur dioxide emissions from large ships to fall by about 80%-85%. Accordingly, the reflective 'ship tracks' over busy ocean lanes thinned, and the cooling they had provided faded with them. Unsurprisingly, estimates of how much warming this unmasks vary widely - from a few hundredths of a

degree to around 0.1°C this decade, depending on which assumptions you start from - with the effect concentrated in the northern hemisphere, where most shipping runs.⁶ With far less of this 'good' pollution, to put it another way, it looks like there has been a spike in temperatures - but that would be mistaken, or so argues Michael Mann.

As for Berkeley Earth, it took a studied 'middle position' in its report for 2025.⁷ This involves placing 2025 as the *third* warmest year on record and kept the long-run trend since 1980 at about 0.2°C per decade, treating the 2023-25 spike as a likely sign of faster warming - with a warning that the past rate may no longer be a reliable predictor of the next decade, since natural and human causes are tangled together in complex ways. Berkeley Earth also makes the important point that in some ocean regions the sulphur cuts have largely run their course, which limits how much additional warming they can still unmask.

Deadlines

We need to emphasise once again that, because 2024 was the first calendar year to average more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures, that is not the same as breaching the Paris target - which is defined over a multi-decade average rather than any one hot year. After all, the acceleration argument rests on a *small* number of recent years - precisely why it is so contested. A run of cooler years would weaken it and continued record warmth would strengthen it. The 2026 and 2027 figures for El Niño will obviously tell us more than any single paper, and further research will be required to work out how much of the recent heat the shipping aerosol cuts and the cloud changes are actually responsible for.

But, when it comes down to it, warming is running at least as fast as expected - maybe even faster - and shows no sign of slowing. Quite the opposite. Beyond 1.5°C warming, which we have now reached, there is a grave risk that the planet will cross key tipping points - from the dieback of the Amazon rainforest to the thawing of Arctic permafrost, which would further accelerate warming in a negative feedback loop. The young Stefan Rahmstorf - as a scientist in

the 1990s, at a time when the facts of climate change started to become clear - "could not have imagined that policymakers would get such clear evidence that we are heading into a very serious disaster for humanity and not act" - using his words. But that is essentially what has happened - especially true in the USA, where the government "basically just denies reality".⁸

But it is not just the USA, of course. For all his fine words, Sir Keir Starmer seems to be planning to cut net-zero spending to fund a defence boost - sources suggest that this could involve scaling back the £9.4 billion that the government committed to 'carbon capture and storage' projects in the spending review last year. It is also claimed that the prime minister blames Ed Miliband, the energy secretary, for briefing against him in the wake of Labour's disastrous local election results.⁹ The defence investment plan - due to be announced this week before a Nato summit next month in Ankara - could possibly be delayed even further. Britain is the second bottom in a Nato league table that ranks member-states based on the extent to which they are meeting their rearmament promises.

David Lammy, deputy prime minister, insisted the plan would be "absolutely clear" before the Nato summit - just you see! When asked on the BBC's *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* if he would be happy to give up some of his own budget as justice secretary to divert money to the armed forces, Lammy said defence was the "first purpose" of the nation, so "the money will be found" to meet spending commitments - the UK government is expected to produce a fully-funded plan, spelling out what it can and will contribute to Nato beyond its Trident nuclear missile system.

Starmer is far more concerned with Britain's position in the imperialist pecking order than devoting the resources needed in an attempt to restore the *natural conditions*, which we humans, being part of nature, depend upon for our very existence ●

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