

weekly worker



Aping Harvey Weinstein, YP demands CEC members sign non-disclosure agreements. Corbyn should hang his head in shame

- Letters and debate
- Ceuta migrant breakout
- Imperial world disorder
- Pauline Hanson's rise

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Towards a mass Communist Party

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REPUBLICS DON'T GROW ON TREES



LETTERS



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

Two titans?

A debate on how to fight the mounting wave of racist reaction is desperately needed. We welcome, then, the rare contribution by the Revolutionary Communist Party, penned by comrade Jack Tye Wilson: 'Stand up to opportunism - why the SWP gets everything wrong on racism', published on the RCP website on July 31.

As was noted by Matthew B in his July 9 letter to the *Weekly Worker*, the RCP is becoming one of the most prominent organisations of the far left in Britain. It claims over 1,300 members, making it about half the size of the target of comrade Wilson's critique: the SWP. A debate between these two titans will no doubt be of great interest to advanced workers and youth, and serve to clarify the perspectives and tasks of communists. Jump in!

Firstly, let us state that we agree with the Marxist criticism of Stand Up to Racism: that it is a liberal coalition, seeking accommodation with the ruling class in the name of 'anti-racism', and therefore is a political obstacle to the development of the revolutionary proletarian movement. The RCP, however, wields its criticism in an incoherent and hypocritical way. It does not even propose a way forward for the movement, but is completely disorientated by its own false perspective.

Comrade Wilson accuses the SWP of being unable to explain why racism exists, or why there has been a growth in anti-immigration politics, xenophobic assaults and a rising atmosphere of terror against ethnic and religious minorities. The SWP, Comrade Wilson argues, simply says racism exists because people are racist. The RCP's supposedly materialist alternative explanation is that people are racist because they are angry.

Comrade Wilson's criticisms fall flat, because there is not a thread of difference between himself and what he criticises. Where the SWP blames politicians for "normalising" racism and making it "mainstream", the RCP blames demagogues for "whipping up" racism and misdirecting the anger of the working class. Is there any difference here? For one, the old politicians are to blame; for the other, it's the new ones. In both cases, the conclusion that follows is that there simply needs to be a battle of ideas against the nasty racists.

Comrade Wilson makes no mention of the fact that racial oppression has a material basis in capitalist society, that it serves to divide the working class by maintaining a layer that is more exploited and more easily subject to state violence; or that this is maintained and deepened during times of crisis by state policies on policing, immigration, employment rights, etc. Perhaps he simply forgot. We look forward to the upcoming RCP pamphlet on the struggle against racism by Fiona Lali, which will hopefully show a Marxist understanding of this question.

While we hold our breath, let us examine what comrade Wilson and the RCP propose as a strategy to fight racist reaction. Quite rightly, he criticises the moralism of SUtR and its 'peace, love, unity' brand. This is indeed repellent to anyone seeking a serious struggle, and the simple celebration of refugees, tolerance, diversity and the like is plain old liberalism. Comrade Wilson levels the charge that this sort of politics only enhances the "culture war divides" that prevent workers from realising

their true class interests. Perhaps he is right, but where does the RCP stand on this?

Is it class struggle or culture war to be on SUtR demos, hysterically shouting about how the far right are racist paedophiles? Or that refugee small boats are good, while the billionaire yachts are bad? But don't say 'Refugees welcome'! Do RCP comrades sincerely think it is enough to raise the slogan, "Class war, not culture war", to transform vacuous liberal phrases into a "class-based programme"? Or that a little RCP bloc on the super-liberal Together Alliance march turns it into a "show of strength for the left"?

Once again comrade Wilson's criticisms are hypocritical, and the RCP's current trajectory represents no break with the methods of the SWP whatsoever. Yes, we do need class struggle and a class-independent programme to break the dominance of bourgeois, reactionary rubbish over the proletariat. This won't be done by waving red flags.

What is most striking about the RCP's turn towards the anti-racist movement is its long-avoided admission that rightwing reaction is a serious force to be reckoned with. This realisation is still very partial, however. For the RCP, fascism is not a particular form of counterrevolution that can be defined scientifically, but a purely historical phenomenon that can and will never be repeated. This is a dogma that has long been held to distinguish the RCP (and its forerunner, Socialist Appeal) from the SWP since the early days of SUtR and its sister, Unite Against Fascism.

To comrade Wilson the theory of fascism is junk and anyone who raises it is simply blind to the tremendous growth of the revolutionary proletariat, the rising tide of class struggle and the explosive uprisings on the horizon. The workers are "objectively stronger than they have ever been in history". Somebody should let them know this! The total hollowing out of the working class, the near collapse of the trade unions as class organisations, the defeat or complete absence of any serious workers' struggles, the stranglehold of reactionary conservative and liberal ideas over society - all of these are just figments of the SWP's imagination, comrade Wilson tells us: "the blindest of the blind".

The point of view he expresses is what Leon Trotsky termed "bureaucratic optimism". Because the RCP is having an easy time of it, with plenty of young radicals joining the party, selling papers and raising money, the real conditions of the working class matter less and less. A sober analysis of the balance of forces in society is out of the question - until the bubble bursts, as it surely will.

Comrade Wilson boldly says that the RCP wants to lead - that it deserves to. But, for all his regurgitated blather about "the Marxist method", he cannot show why or how. The RCP's track record in all the mass movements of the past decade is risible. From Corbyn to the climate strikes, to the Palestine movement, the RCP has been dragged along in the wake of petty bourgeois tendencies. They were tempted by Your Party and then the Greens, before bottling it. One hopes at least some of the RCP cadre are beginning to learn.

Being a vanguard or a revolutionary leadership does not mean simply having the most radical sounding slogans, or the most well-run reading groups, or even the most accurate prognosis of events. It doesn't mean having the biggest membership either. It means actually grasping the broadest tasks of the movement, putting forward a strategy to advance the struggle, and fighting for it more consistently than any other trend.

The RCP has to face the challenge of breaking from its path of sterile sectarianism, and prove itself as a viable revolutionary force. If it does not, then its growth will result in little more than trading places with the SWP.

RD Hogan
email

Terrorists so-called

When Nigel Farage was debanked in June 2023 by Coutts for his political opinions, it made the national headlines. Dame Alison Rose, CEO of the National Westminster Group, which owned Coutts, was forced to resign.

In July 2024 I was debanked by Nationwide Bank for "regulatory reasons" (they refused to provide actual reasons) despite the fact that I had been with Nationwide for over a quarter of a century. Then in July 2025 I was also debanked by HSBC, which closed the account that my wife and I had open for our son, who is autistic. The only transactions that were made on it were for my son's care.

At the same time I was debanked by First Direct, the telephone bank owned by HSBC, which I had been with for 33 years, just three years less than the bank itself had been in existence. Again no explanation was provided by either bank and, unlike with Farage, my debanking has attracted no publicity from the mainstream press.

Then in June 2026 Santander froze both my personal accounts and those of the Brighton Trust - a registered charity for which I am treasurer. At the time of writing they are still frozen. No explanation has been given for their actions. In July 2026 Kent Reliance (One Savings Bank) also froze the savings accounts of my family without giving any explanation. They have now closed them.

In December 2023 I was arrested for supporting the October 7 resistance operation by Palestinians in Gaza. I have been charged under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for what is an expression of opinion - but which is classified as 'terrorism' today. In much the same way over 3,000 people have been arrested for supporting the 'terrorist' group, Palestine Action.

It is clear that some official national organisation - either the National Crime Agency or the Counter-Terror Police - has been feeding malicious allegations to the banks. Under money-laundering and anti-terrorist legislation, if banks are told that someone is suspected of money-laundering, then they are forbidden to 'tip off' the customer for fear of jeopardising an investigation. That may make sense when someone is involved in financing the drugs trade or Islamic State, but makes no sense when the 'terrorism' alleged is an expression of free speech.

At my trial, beginning on August 18, I will be pleading not guilty to supporting a proscribed organisation, Hamas. Clearly certain agencies of the state cannot wait for the trial verdict and are actively seeking to destabilise me. I make no apology for supporting Palestinian resistance against Israel's genocidal occupation, which is now 59 years old. As far as I am concerned, Palestinian resistance is no different to the resistance of black people during apartheid in South Africa. The only difference is that conditions in Israel today for the Palestinians are far worse than they ever were in South Africa.

In the 1980s both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher called the African National Congress terrorists. However, neither of them went as far as to accuse their supporters of terrorism too. But in today's political climate any support for Palestinian resistance against Israel's genocidal army is called 'terrorism' - indeed the

accusation of terrorism is being made against UN rapporteur Francesca Albanese. We live in an era where opponents of western wars and their actual terrorism are themselves being accused of 'terrorism'.

Debanking someone because of their political opinions is 'financial terrorism', yet that is what the British state is doing today - not only to me, but to Greater Manchester Friends of Palestine and the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The BBC and British press, who were ready to cry foul when the leader of Britain's racist Reform Party was debanked, are, of course, remarkably silent, when it comes to opponents of racism.

Tony Greenstein
Brighton

Animal rights

I recently sought to interview some fellow members of the Democratic Socialists of America, who are interested in reforming or abolishing animal exploitation - a cause which, sadly, receives scant attention across the political spectrum, including the left, where it fits most naturally. I'm very grateful for those who took the time to answer my questions about their views regarding non-humans, how animal issues can be taken more seriously within DSA, and what plausible non-human policy they would like every leftwing candidate to support.

■ Jishnu Guha-Majumdar is assistant professor in political theory at Butler University, with a focus on the relationship between animal and human liberation, and co-chair of the Central Indiana DSA chapter. He described himself as an abolitionist on the question of animal use, but he questioned the utility of the welfare-vs-abolition framework, saying the real issue was whether reforms sustain or challenge core-system logics. Guha-Majumdar argued that classical abolitionism, represented by thinkers like Tom Regan and Gary Francione, was very good at saying what we should not do to animals, but less good at outlining what a just society with

animals would look like. For this, he turned to writers like Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka:

"The majority of DSA members don't even think of animals rights issues as on the map of the organisation, and so that will have to be a site of struggle," Guha-Majumdar said. "A working group and/or issue-specific publication could be helpful, but it is important to understand what its goals are. I would argue there should be two: to provide a rallying point for pro-animal advocates in the organisation to acknowledge each other and to come up with a relatively unified strategy for a DSA animal rights 'line'; [and] to shift consciousness ... about the way that the domination of animals is central to capitalism and that animals are subjects of solidarity." He suggested there might be national-level reading groups on texts like Dinesh Wadiwel's *Animals and Capital*.

Guha-Majumdar believed DSA candidates should support policies focused on altering the incentive structure of food production. He backed public funding for alternative-protein development, but thought an ideal platform would fully socialise the cultivated-meat industry, as author Jan Dutkiewicz recommended in a 2019 *Jacobin* article. Guha-Majumdar argued that ideas like these - along with efforts to redirect farm subsidies away from meat and dairy production - should be incorporated into discussion of a proposed Green New Deal, given the severe climate costs of animal agriculture.

■ Leo Neustadt is a former member of New York City DSA, who has been involved in the Madison-area chapter for approximately two years. The members believed no animal should be exploited for any reason, including human consumption. Neustadt understood this to be an extension of socialist values. While they seek to end all animal use, Neustadt recognised no profound change happens in a single step, and was willing to pursue welfare reforms. They were frustrated when the DSA's Green New Deal Campaign Committee made no mention of the environmental impact of animal

Fighting fund

Keep them coming

Let me start by reminding readers that the *Weekly Worker* is about to begin its two-week summer break. In other words, there will be no issue published on August 13 or 20 and the next edition will be on Thursday August 27.

In the meantime, please feel free to join us at Communist University (August 8-15) in central London - you can also attend online. For more details, please go to www.communistuniversity.uk, where you will find information about booking your place at the venue, as well as how you can join in the CU debate via the internet.

Following this issue, of course, there will be no update from me on our fighting fund until three weeks time, so here are the latest details. First of all, it's disappointing to report that, very unusually, no donations at all were received in the last two days of July - not a disaster, because we had already narrowly exceeded the monthly £2,750 target, so last week's £2,808 was the final figure.

Quite a contrast with the first five days of August - a very handy £628 has already come

our way! Thanks very much to comrades MM, AC and TB in particular for their brilliant *three-figure* contributions, as well as the more modest, but very welcome, donations from comrades LC and BO (£50 each), MM (£31), CG (£30), RG (£25), DL and MT (£20), CP (£16), AN (£15), RM (£13), RP (£12), MM (£11), DI (£10) and BG (£5).

All the above were donated via bank transfer or standing order, while we also received £5 each from comrades TM and JN (PayPal), plus comrade Hassan (cash).

We hope things go well for all our readers and supporters over the rest of August, and that you keep those donations coming in. Thanks to you, the *Weekly Worker* is able to continue playing its essential role. I'll let you know how things stand in three weeks time! ●

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

agriculture. Like Guha-Majumdar, Neustadt believed the Green New Deal was an avenue through which the DSA could address non-human issues:

“I think a reasonable policy would be to end inhumane conditions for animals bred for slaughter,” Neustadt said, when asked what position they would like every leftist candidate to adopt. “Everything about the way animals are kept and treated is abhorrent, including the slaughtering itself. But I know people are going to continue to eat meat for the foreseeable future, so, at the very least, we should have federal guidelines and standards on how many animals can be in a certain amount of space to avoid overcrowding, allow free time outdoors for sunlight and grazing, and end the forced molestation and rape of these creatures who have no voice.”

■ Ben Wendt is a former co-chair of Baton Rouge DSA, concerned with the ethical and ecological implications of animal agriculture. He approved of non-human welfare reforms, but thought they were of limited value, due to the power of industry, among other things. Ultimately, Wendt believed a socialist society, where people are educated about the harms of animal agriculture, would choose to greatly reduce it. That said, he was pessimistic about people’s views of non-humans changing, and thought an environmental or workers’ rights critique of the food system would be more effective. For this reason, Wendt was not enthusiastic about an animal-focused working group within the DSA.

He wanted DSA political candidates to support cutting subsidies to the animal agriculture industry. “Those subsidies could be invested in lab meat, small and cooperative farming, or returning land to indigenous peoples,” Wendt said. “A few other, not very radical policies would be to ban the agriculture industry from lobbying the USDA to get their sector on the nutrition guidelines (most people are lactose-intolerant, so how can dairy be an essential nutrient?), repeal bans on reporters and union activists from going to factory farms, strengthen FDA laws on what marketing terms the industry can use, and pardon imprisoned animal activists.”

■ Kiirstin Kuhi is a member of NYC DSA, within which she helped launch an unofficial vegan group, Socialists for Animal Justice (SAJ). Kuhi

supported the abolition of all forms of non-human use, but was willing to advance welfare reforms in the short term. SAJ is one attempt to answer the question of how non-human issues might be taken more seriously within the DSA. Initially, her group voted to call themselves ‘DSA for Animal Justice’, but backed off, as they were not yet formally recognised as a working group or club. Kuhi thought organising locally, as opposed to nationally, was a good place to start. However, she acknowledged SAJ was still trying to find its footing.

“We hope to continue building community through future events, including a collaboration with the Ecosocialist Working Group on a screening of the film, *The smell of money*, canvasses for DSA candidates who align with our values, and eventual legislation that protects our planet and all its inhabitants,” Kuhi said, noting they showed up to canvass as SAJ. “I’m not sure an issue-specific publication would be the most effective approach, since you’d still have to find people to read it. Social gatherings and potlucks, on the other hand, provide opportunities to get DSA members plugged into our work through one-on-one conversations about these issues.”

She found it difficult to choose one plausible, pro-animal policy she’d like every DSA candidate to endorse, because one never knows what’s plausible until it’s actually done. Kuhi cited a bill put forward by New York State senator Jabari Brisport, a DSA member, that would forbid the issuing or authorising of any permits to new or expanding large concentrated animal feeding operations, as an example of something she was not sure was achievable right now. Kuhi said she felt a deep empathy for dairy cows, because she was also capable of getting pregnant and giving birth, and thus would like to focus on some reform of the industry exploiting them.

■ Justin Anthony Knapp is a member of Central Indiana DSA. He believed our relationship with animals needs to be reimagined and radically changed, but didn’t think this would happen in his lifetime. Knapp emphasised the continuity between humans and other creatures. He argued, within the DSA, that animal activists should raise consciousness about non-human welfare and ‘ag-gag’ laws, which criminalise whistleblowing and undercover investigations of

farm facilities. Knapp added that DSA-backed candidates should seek to overturn ag-gag laws on first amendment grounds.

■ Shawna Rose Robbins Nixon is a member of Silicon Valley DSA. Her father has been involved with the group since its founding in 1982, following the merger of the Democratic Socialist Organising Committee and the New American Movement. She approved of a variety of forms of animal use, conceding her stance might simply reflect a desire to eat meat, but wanted to improve non-human treatment. Nixon thought an issue-specific publication or working group would be a good way to get animal issues taken more seriously within DSA. She wanted leftist candidates to back the abolition of animal testing, which Nixon considered inhumane and outdated.

■ A member of NYC DSA, Cody Smith is a third-generation participant in the beef industry and a second-generation cattle rancher. He became committed to animal rights after majoring in philosophy in college. Smith was not sure whether welfare reforms helped or merely assuaged ethical concerns and normalised non-human exploitation. Within his DSA branch, he is primarily involved with the membership committee, the Central Brooklyn Community Solidarity Committee, the Political Education Committee and the Socialists for Animal Justice group.

“We’re in the process of creating a formal DSA vegan group in NYC,” he said, adding that SAJ seeks to promote veganism within the DSA and turn vegan liberals into socialists. “We do this by collaborating with the DSA’s Ecosocialist group, pushing for animal rights legislation, drawing connections between animal rights and other liberation movements, and organising vegan events within and outside of the DSA. I’m not particularly plugged into the electoral elements of DSA, but I think cultured meat is worth investing in . . . On a similar note, if plant-based food can be produced inexpensively for schools, Meatless Mondays for schools can be an easy win.”

Jon Hochschartner
Connecticut DSA

It’s not cricket

It’s a pleasant change to have some sport in the *Weekly Worker* - not that I’ve ever been a keen sportsman. I’ve played all sorts, mostly at school, and enjoy watching from time to time. However, I was struck by Carl Collins’ latest piece, ‘Capitalism’s compressed game’ (July 30).

Over 20 years ago I went to India with a friend from work, who was born there. We stayed with his family in New Delhi and for a while in a place they had in Bangalore. We travelled around a lot - to the Taj Mahal, of course, and lots of other extremely beautiful and interesting places. We went by taxi nearly all of the time - amazingly cheap, compared with here.

All over - in cities, towns, villages, lone shops or other trading places - we saw kids playing cricket. I remember outside a car sale or repair shop, there was a group of lads with an old tyre propped up, a stick of some kind and a ball, playing the game. It reminded me of back home in the 1950s, when lads would play cricket in some manner all over the place and at all hours. In those days in residential areas and the countryside there was very little traffic and we kids could disappear as long as we were back home for meals and bedtime. Generally, wickets would be literally chalked up - on playground walls, garden walls, the gable end of a row of terraced house - and someone would have a bat and someone a ball.

India now has a population well over a billion more than England, so it

is no surprise if they do rather better at all sorts of things - including cricket. England does, however, have a further disadvantage or two. It’s not safe for youngsters to play in the streets now and the alternatives - school playing fields and even school playgrounds - are not what they used to be.

Further, local playing fields are being closed down - along with youth clubs, sports clubs and all sorts of places (and coaches) that might have aided an upward trajectory for talented and enthusiastic youngsters. True, the ‘playing fields of Eton’ are still there and they, along with a few other spots, are a bit more green than some places at the moment - but that provides for only a few.

We need to give the kids (lads *and* *lasses*) somewhere to play again; not to mention an education and a job.

Jim Nelson
email

Unite election

I agree with Tony Greenstein (Letters, July 23), where he is incredulous that the *Weekly Worker* has nothing to say about the general secretary election of one of Britain’s largest unions, Unite. Despite the *Weekly Worker* relying on the involvement of trade unions in funding the Labour Party to justify their support for it, they give hardly any coverage to trade unions these days (the election closes on August 11).

I differ with Tony’s main criticisms. He complains of Sharon Graham’s stance on Israel/Palestine, calling her a “pro-Zionist” and “pro-imperialist”, whilst lauding her only opponent, Simon Dubbins, for having a “consistent record of support for the Palestinians” and opposing “increased military expenditure”. That is an important difference, to be sure, but Dubbins does not mention the Gaza conflict/Palestinians anywhere in his election address! Why not?

On the Labour Party, Sharon mentions having “cut funding to politicians” (yes, she doesn’t mention the cut was to the funding of Labour). However, Dubbins simply says, “Our members will decide the future of the link between our union and the Labour Party” and “Politically we will only support politicians who support us.” Note, Dubbins does not state where he actually stands on the question of Unite funding the Labour Party.

He does state he will “open the books” for complete transparency on how members’ money is spent. He says nothing about Unite’s Birmingham hotel scandal - whereas Sharon does, and says she has commissioned independent legal inquiries, and a full audit of Unite accounts, whilst internal Unite factions have tried blocking her. She pledges to get every penny of members’ money back. She issued a statement on this to all members, so it’s odd that Dubbins says nothing.

He has a right to stand, but if he wins that would remove one of the few female general secretaries of a union that we have - an equality consideration that Dubbins says nothing about. For those who major on DEL, that is an issue here.

Tony says Sharon has given “next to no support to the Birmingham bin workers”. Well, apart from making a powerful address to the said workers in Birmingham on the September 20 2025 march and rally (I was there, was Simon Dubbins?). I am presuming Unite paid those workers strike pay during their long fight? Hardly ‘nothing’ then? Dubbins makes no mention of this important and long-running dispute.

Tony, in his admirable support of international causes, seems to forget the first duty of a trade union is to its members and their jobs. Also, for a union to be strong it needs the maximum possible membership

density in a workplace to be able to have maximum unity and strength in a strike. Supporting causes that divide and alienate some/many members does lead to resignations. Whilst some may say ‘good riddance to bigots’, reducing membership (and strength) should be thought through and a factor. One non-member talks others out of membership and is a future strike breaker.

I was a lifelong (44 years) civil service worker and very active member of the Public and Commercial Services union, which has the most affiliations to progressive causes of all our unions. However, most members (at least 95%) do not go on any demonstrations, not even Palestine or climate change. If unions only recruited workers who tick all the ‘progressive cause’ boxes, they’d have very few members. In the workplace, union density is crucial.

Despite having the biggest workforce ever in British history, union membership has declined from nine million in 1979 to just six million today - membership is predominantly in the public sector, with far fewer in the private sector. As with politicians, most of the working class today are utterly disillusioned with trade unions, feeling they too have lost touch with their concerns.

A final point: ‘the left’ in Unison, and especially Unite, seem to be organised by/for full-time, unelected officials. Only two candidates for general secretary in Unite - both full-timers. It should be a worry for the left that no rank-and-file members stood for this position and that the Unite left didn’t stand a non-full-timer. That suggests the left, such that it is in Unite, is under the control of unelected full-time officers.

Dave Vincent
Yorkshire

Red escorts

I would like to reply to the letter titled ‘Prostitution’ by Bill Wright in the May 7 edition (I apologise for the delay in replying). Bill makes some very good points about prostitution in pre-revolutionary Russia. However, times have moved on - prostitution in the Anglo-Saxon countries is now a minor activity on the edges of society.

My views on the need for the legalisation of brothels come from watching an edition of *Whicker’s World* - ‘Living with Waltzing Matilda’ - in 1986, where Alan Whicker interviewed the owner from Liverpool and the staff of three brothels in Perth, Western Australia.

My views on escorting come from a friend, who told me to always use a condom, as some women get pregnant to trap men into a relationship. My friend also told me that most women are not interested in the size of men’s private parts, but are interested in what makes them tick. My views also come from the website of the late Marc Perkel from Missouri, who died in 2018. Marc had had a very bad divorce, where all his wealth was taken by his ex-wife and lawyers. He wrote that escorts can help men get over divorce or bereavement.

Bill Wright’s concluding remarks about the need to abolish all sex work come from the reactionary policies of the Communist Party of the USA. Stalin’s sexually repressed Soviet Union was exposed in George Lucas’s film *THX 1138*, and in George Orwell’s books, *Animal farm* and *1984*.

Escorts will still exist under communism - they will still enjoy meeting clients. There will still be married men with wives going through the menopause. There will still be shy and disabled men, and those with Aspergers Syndrome. Escorts will still exist in a moneyless society.

John Smithee
Cambridgeshire

Summer Offensive

Two thirds there!

The CPGB’s ongoing Summer Offensive fund-raising campaign progresses. Just to remind readers once again, this paper is not subsidised through advertising revenue, as is the capitalist media (and, indeed, the *New Statesman*). Nor is it financed by (for example) library subscriptions from the remaining ‘actually existing socialist countries’.

Political independence depends on financial independence: raising the money from CPGB members and from supporters of the paper to keep our ability to be an independent communist political voice. We do so with tiny organised forces, reflecting the seriousness with which we take the party question and the need for a communist political voice. We raise funds specifically for the *Weekly Worker* through the paper’s weekly fighting fund. But the

Summer Offensive is essential to the CPGB’s major projects.

To remind readers, the target is £20,000. Comrades pledged £12,900 at the launch on June 28. We are past that number now in terms of money in, with £13,665.97 received. There are still a few days before the beginning of Communist University in London - and CU itself usually makes a substantial addition to the Summer Offensive, which concludes at the end of Communist University on August 15. So we can be reasonably confident of making the target.

Comrades show considerable ingenuity in raising funds: income has come from the sale of books, badges, etc, as well as from extra earnings like overtime worked. But now we need to make one last push between now and the end of Communist University to get past that target ●

Tim Browning

MONARCHY

Republics don't grow on trees

According to pollsters the king is more popular than ever. So much for the reassuring reformist dream that Charles would kill the monarchy all on his own, writes Paul Demarty

The other day, when I was browsing a second-hand bookshop, as I often do, a particular item jumped out at me from the 50p bin. Reader, I simply *had* to have it. It dates from 1989, and is written by Maxwell Hutchinson, then president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The title: *The Prince of Wales: right or wrong? An architect replies*.

I have not had a chance to read it yet, though I did chortle a little at the first sentence of Richard Rogers' preface: "In a democracy it is extremely difficult to argue with the heir to the throne." It is also difficult, one assumes, to argue with the *Führer* or the *generalissimo* or the party general secretary in a "democracy". Yet it calls to mind what may be the first of the then-crown prince's endless interventions in politics and culture (which, of course, concerned architecture).

The future king's hatred of the contemporary state of the profession was quite intense. He compared a proposed modernist extension to the National Gallery to "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend"; he noted that, for all the demerits of the Luftwaffe, at least they had the decency to leave nothing worse than ruins in their wake, unlike the post-war rebuilders. His obsession yielded, in time, the chocolate-boxy new town of Poundbury, and similar schemes up to the present day (and also strangled the National Gallery extension in its cradle).

Hobby-horse

After that, his little hobby-horses grew into a vast herd. There was the sentimental agrarianism, the vague sense that he should prefer to be king over a picturesque landscape of little hobbit shires; his dabbling in Eastern Orthodoxy and even Islam; his ecological opposition to genetically modified crops; the countless intrusive missives to ministers that got nicknamed "the black spider memos" after his distinctive hand. (In at least one of these, to his credit, he suggested that appointing then-Prince Andrew to a trade envoy role would amount to a ludicrously expensive, round-the-world shagathon for his errant brother - a judgment amply confirmed with the passage of time.)

In those days, mainstream anti-monarchist opinion oddly took heart. This was a peccadillo in a prince, the reasoning went, but would be a cardinal sin in a king. Elizabeth II was popular, but she took an extremely restrictive interpretation of her public role, remaining for the most part politically inscrutable, as if she were on a 70-year work-to-rule action. When her meddling eldest took the throne, the spell would finally be broken. People would see what a grotesque anachronism the whole thing was; it would be at an end.

That has never been the opinion of what would happen around these parts, of course, and one more piece of evidence appeared quietly last week. YouGov found that 68% of Britons have a favourable view of Charles's performance as king. This is his highest ever rating. It comes in a year when the royals finally had to kick Andrew to the curb, as well, with the most intense wave of 'monarchy is dead' republican wishcasting since the death of Charles's ex-wife Diana Spencer in 1997. For all that, he is sitting pretty.

How can this be? Even I - an old-time cynic, when it comes to monarchy self-destruction narratives - was taken aback somewhat. This



Republicanism needs more than the politics of protest, it need the politics of working class power

really has been a dreadful year for the institution - surely it must have been. Does Joe Public really buy the idea that Charles and his (even more popular) heir, William, acted decisively in the case of Andrew? A frankly risible proposition, based on the timelines concerned. Does Joe Public want to buy a bridge?

Yet here we are. To be sure, the king has not been very much like the prince in practice. Whether he has mellowed with age, or his various infirmities - including a public battle with cancer - have reduced the energy he has spare to fight for his Quixotic causes, he has ended up reigning rather like his mother: a taciturn and solemn teleprompter reader for the government of the day. The conditions for the old liberal-republican scenario, with the monarchy ending itself in a grand *auto-da-fé*, have not in fact arisen.

Perhaps he was always cleverer than he seemed. His road to the throne was longer than anticipated; in those endless years, he had ample opportunity to soak up the tight-lipped statecraft of dear mamma - perhaps he simply did so. Yet to understand this is to understand the foolishness of the liberal-republican hope. It takes us to the threshold of understanding the monarchy *as an institution*, a load-bearing component of the British constitution, and not merely a strangely overpowered platform for the views held by the monarch of the day.

Constitution

The age of the monarchy is, of course, a political question: for Tories of the old school, we must go back at least to the unification of the kingdom of England under Æthelstan, and thus has proud Anglo-Saxon lineage; but a more appropriate starting point for the institution we know today might be 1688, when a rebellion against the restored Stuart dynasty called on an invasion from the Dutch republic, and William of Orange assumed the throne of England with strong constitutional limitations on his power. The Act of Union with Scotland in 1707 expanded this settlement, broadly

speaking, to the whole of Great Britain (and the 1800 Act of Union extended it to Ireland).

The king enjoyed a freer role in those days, it is true, than he does today. Yet the essentials of the picture were in place - the king was the king in parliament, and ruled through a hybrid government of elected 'popular' representatives (barely deserving that adjective at all until at least 1832) in the House of Commons and hereditary grandees in the House of Lords. Already at this point politics was dividing into historic parties - initially the Whigs and Tories (which became, in due course, the Liberals and Conservatives). Given the agonistic conflict built into the system, the primary role of the monarch was ensuring continuity: the king needed the consent of parliament, but parliament needed the blessing of the king.

The monarchy is the principle of *coherence* of the British constitutional order. It intercedes in the decisive moments of our political life. The armed forces swear loyalty to the crown, as do parliamentarians and various civil servants and the primates of the Church of England. It provides the civic religion. One need not have a monarch to play this last role. Since departing from British imperial government, the United States has found the written constitution *itself* a suitable object of such veneration, for example. Yet this is the one we have.

Defence of the monarchy is thus defence of the overall social order: the two are not the same thing, but are not easily separable, given the particular historical development of Britain. It is thus mother's milk to all the constitutional parties, the formal representatives of the capitalist class as such (the Confederation of British Industry and so forth), and the bourgeois media.

For this reason, all dreams of the mysterious self-abolition of the British monarchy are just that: dreams. The formal schemes among liberal republicans for the introduction of a written constitution with an elected presidency, have a certain sense: at

least, in this view, *someone* will have to introduce legislation. Yet both American and French presidential 'republicanism' and British monarchy seem to have the same defects: a thoroughly and repulsively corrupt public life, and comprehensive alienation of ordinary citizens from administration.

This is the last and best disproof of the common idea that the monarchy is some kind of anachronism. Why would it be? We live in a capitalist society; as such, the boss is king of his own demesne. The liberty of the capitalist to dispose of his property how he desires, and the liberty of the worker to enter into contracts or else starve, is one part of capitalist rule - the domination of management and ownership over production is another. This is an unstable combination, fought out in political and economic struggle; thus various forms of constitutional rule, with radically truncated democratic elements, tend to result. It would be preferable, all things being equal, to have an elected president than a hereditary, constitutional monarchy; but only marginally. Both express more or less equally well the underlying relations of class to class.

Truly radical

The monarchy is not exactly in rude health, but then neither is the American constitutional regime, or for that matter the French. It is hardly surprising; recovery from the 2008 crisis has been sluggish across the board, and the signs are that we are in a prolonged period of crisis of a sort historically ended by great-power war. In this period, the effort given to royal pageantry has notably increased. To be sure, that is partly a matter of opportunity: we have had a royal wedding, a big jubilee, the death of Elizabeth and coronation of Charles. Yet the obvious decrepitude of the state places all the more weight on the shoulders of that precious principle of continuity.

The possibility cannot be *excluded* that the monarchy will find some way to self-destruct. Life is strange. But we must proceed on the basis that it will

not; and we must take into account the reasons *why* it will not. Therefore, we need a truly radical republicanism - one that takes aim not merely at the superficial forms in which power is distributed among the branches of government, but the intrinsic tendency to domination in the elementary structures of capitalist society.

A democratic-republican constitution worthy of the name would, of course, have no king, but also no executive president (in the end, merely an 'elected king'). It would not function by way of a cautious apparatus of checks and balances, but by investing all power in institutions where the popular will is most clearly expressed. That would be the elected legislature - elected proportionally, so as to actually represent that popular will - with short parliamentary terms and the right of recall through parties, at all levels of government from the local to the supranational.

The left in this country is oddly silent on the question of the monarchy. Most groups formally approve of its abolition; but in day-to-day agitation, constitutional questions are largely secondary. The reason is that it is divisive. A large, though not overwhelming, majority favour the monarchy to some extent; serious and sustained propaganda against it is taken to be a disadvantage in organising mass action (or the 'Potemkin village' version of mass action that sometimes substitutes for it).

But socialism is a project of the conscious masses. It is for that reason that we are republicans at all: our project is democratic self-rule all the way down. There can be no victory without confronting the system of rule, as it actually exists, consciously and not merely at the level of spontaneity (dodging police horses in a kettling, and so forth).

A permanent practice of republican propaganda and agitation is indispensable for socialist victory - a purely hypothetical republicanism, or one expressed only in shopkeeperish gripes about the cost to the taxpayer, will not do the job ●

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MIGRATION

They will keep coming

Driven by lack of opportunity, poverty, wars, social chaos and climate change, millions of Africans head north in the hope of eventually getting to Europe, Ceuta being just an extreme example. So, asks **Eddie Ford**, how should the workers' movement respond?

At the end of July an estimated 80,000 predominantly young men crossed over the border from north-western Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, while smaller numbers attempted to get into another enclave, Melilla, about 250 miles away along the Mediterranean coastline.¹ These small Spanish "autonomous cities" form the European Union's only external land border with Africa. Most entered by swimming around the Tarajal and Benzú breakwaters or by crossing on foot along the shoreline, and by August 4 at least 99 were reported to have drowned.

Spain claims that these enclaves form an "integral part" of its national territory, though Morocco claims sovereignty over both cities and often refers to them as "occupied lands". Rabat, of course, is being hypocritical as it has absolutely no qualms in occupying somebody else's land - in the form of Western Sahara since 1975, dubbed "Africa's last colony". Anyway, the leader of the Spanish enclave - Juan Jesús Viva of the People's Party (PP) - described last week's border crossings as an "atrocities" and fundamentally an attack on Spain's "territorial integrity" that was "if not orchestrated, at least encouraged or permitted by Morocco".²

In fact, though their location has repeatedly made them focal points for migrant entry into Spain and the wider EU, the majority of such arrivals to Spain have come via maritime routes to the Canary Islands rather than through Ceuta or Melilla. However, a previous 'migration wave' in 2021 saw Morocco trying to exert political pressure on Spain by temporarily increasing the border's "permeability" and it has been widely suspected that Morocco's growing alignment with the US and Israel has presented it with an opportunity to (a) be seen to punish Pedro Sánchez and his Socialist Workers Party government in Spain for, amongst other things, its stance against the Iran war and general anti-Zionist posturing, and (b) assert its historic claim over the enclaves.

Desperate

This mass influx overwhelmed local reception facilities and prompted the Ceuta administration to request that the Spanish government declare a *national emergency*. But nothing should divert from the *international emergency* that has 80,000 risking death to escape intolerable conditions in both Morocco and their native countries.

While a few originate in Morocco itself, a clear majority come from other parts of Africa: some 58% are reportedly natives of countries in west Africa, 9% from east and central Africa. Many head to Morocco seeking opportunities there, but most are seeking a way into Europe. They are escaping war, persecution, debt and the effects of climate change. Torrential rain, severe flooding and rising temperatures have displaced millions in Nigeria, Niger and Chad.

Their stories are heart-rending. Having survived robber gangs, paid corrupt border guards and eventually arrived at the Mediterranean, they live hand-to-mouth doing this and doing that, till they have the wherewithal to make the hazardous crossing to Europe. Seemingly encouraged by the



Pedro Sánchez monitors Ceuta enclave

Moroccan authorities, Ceuta offered a short-cut. Prompted by social media rumours - eg, that the border had been opened, presumably based on the recent supreme court ruling that the legal procedure known as summary return ('hot return') could not be applied to migrants intercepted - they took their chance. For many it was a death sentence.

One young man, who had defied his mother's warnings, recalled swimming past floating bodies to reach Ceuta - saying "everyone was trying to grab on to you to save themselves", but you had to "move forward, so they wouldn't drag you down or drown you", with the Moroccan police "pushing us toward the water and telling us, 'Swim, swim'".³

On August 3, Spanish government officials said about 70,000 had 'voluntarily' returned to Morocco - but hundreds are still sleeping in parks, public squares and on pavements, it being virtually impossible for migrants to leave Ceuta for mainland Spain. Another migrant left in limbo on Ceuta's streets said, as people steadily returned back over the border, that his goal was simple - get a place in a protection centre, spend the next year learning Spanish and, once he turns 18, find work as a barber.⁴ What he fears most, of course, is ending up without legal documentation. "All I need," he said, "is a chance".

Fatima Hamed Hossain, a member of Ceuta's assembly, cried crocodile tears at the prospect of the crisis deepening divisions within the city. "Everything we've lived through has created tensions between neighbours," she said. "That's exactly what feeds the far right" (she means Vox, not PP itself). But, of course, across the board the global right is "hyperventilating with happiness" over the Ceuta crisis, as one journalist wrote in Spain's *El País* newspaper.⁵ Donald Trump called it a "catastrophe" and an "invasion" - just as Nigel Farage and the rest of the UK right does over the small boat crossings in the English Channel. The Brothers of Italy, the party of prime minister Giorgia Meloni, has been quick to post images of migrants racing through the streets of Ceuta - "this is the model the Italian left wing likes so much," the caption crowed.

Meloni and others on the right maintain that Spain is a 'soft touch'

on migration, especially over its decision in early 2026 to "regularise" 500,000 undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers.⁶ And in response to the Ceuta crossings, Italy temporarily suspended the Schengen arrangement with Spain, citing 'national security' concerns - a move backed by Finland and Denmark - while the Czech Republic's prime minister, Andrej Babiš, urged a temporary suspension of Spain's Schengen membership. In return, Pedro Sánchez declared that he had "serious concerns" about those European governments that had chosen to attack Spain, "driven by prejudice, fake news, ignorance, or political interest".⁷ Of course, for all his occasional 'left' talk, Sánchez is a wily bourgeois politician. His main concern - getting re-elected - means pleasing not only the mainstream media and his traditional electoral base, but also those to the SWP's left. He needs them if his coalition government with Sumar, Catalanian left nationalists and the 'official communists' is to survive - hence his 'combat social democracy' posturing.

Elsewhere, the general picture is of 'supine social democracy' and aping the far right, especially when it comes to migrants - Shabana Mahmood being the perfect example. Labour's home secretary bangs the chauvinist drum whenever given the opportunity, in an attempt to compete with Nigel Farage, Rupert Lowe and even Tommy Robinson ... which actually, in reality, normalises the likes of Farage, Lowe and Robinson.

Emergency

The EU held a hastily arranged video conference on August 4 to discuss Ceuta after the tense exchanges between Spain and other member states, at which Ursula von der Leyen - European Commission president - called for "united action" on border security, reacting to Giorgia Meloni's joint letter with 21 other leaders from Finland to Malta that implicitly criticised Madrid's plan to regularise undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers as a "pull factor" for "illegal migration". Not to mention saying that Spain's supreme court ruling over migrants arriving by sea acted as the "trigger" for "this attack on our migration and asylum system".⁸

Introducing a slight note of discord, Magnus Brunner, the European

commissioner for migration, said that, while the EU could not currently see a direct link between events in Ceuta and Spain's regularisation plan, the policy was "definitely not a good signal for the rest of Europe". He also declined to criticise Italy's decision to reintroduce air and sea border checks with Spain for one month, though diplomatically adding that any suspension of Schengen rules had to be "proportionate and temporary". France was quick to point out that EU leaders had agreed that the Schengen zone was "not the problem" - definitely not! - and it was one of the few member-states not to sign the open letter. Denmark's interior minister, Morten Bødskov - despite being a signatory of the letter - said he was "very satisfied" with Spain's handling of the crisis, but then doubled down on the message that the EU needed tougher border controls: "Uncontrolled immigration is a threat to Europe and Denmark."

Ministers broadly endorsed a five-point plan set out by von der Leyen to strengthen Europe's external borders: preventing irregular migration in the first place via cooperation with partner states; strengthening external borders; implementing early warning systems; dismantling smuggling networks and reinforcing returns. Brunner also said the EU's foreign policy service was investigating the possible role played by Russian "disinformation" - keep banging the war drum - but it was "too early to reach conclusions".

Grotesquely, in a letter to Pedro Sánchez the previous day, Ursula von der Leyen praised the fact that Spanish officials had begun installing a 500-metre floating barrier at the border with Morocco: "Order has been restored and the returns system in place worked," she wrote. The ramparts of Fortress Europe must be secured and outsiders kept out.

Principle

In the CPGB's *Draft programme*, we say communists, "as a matter of principle" are for the free movement of people and against all measures preventing them entering or leaving countries.⁹ Communists also fight for citizenship and voting rights for all who have been resident for longer than six months.

But we are well aware that, all things being equal, most people would

not choose to leave the land of their birth, their friends and relations, and take their chances in a foreign, often hostile, land. That is why we seek to end poverty, lack of opportunity, war and persecution everywhere.

We also make the vital point that the bourgeoisie "uses migrant workers, especially illegals, as worst paid labour" - something ensured through immigration laws and quotas, police raids, detention centres and deportations. In other words, the working class needs strong political and trade union organisation - otherwise workers' living standards and rights will be eroded and driven down.

Withdraw

As for an enclave like Ceuta, communists should be for withdrawing from all such possessions. When it comes to Britain, that not only means tax havens such as Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the Virgin Islands. It also means Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. It means Northern Ireland too. France should likewise give up on its overseas territories such as Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana. Of course, it is not only the old European colonial powers. The United States should hand Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba and withdraw from the US Virgin Islands, Guam and Samoa. People living in such places should be encouraged to seek unity with bigger countries and regional federations ... and join the struggle for democracy and socialism.

Hence, in the case of Morocco, that means fighting for the abolition of the Alawi monarchy. Note, while there is an elected parliament and a prime minister, king Mohammed VI holds supreme executive, military and religious authority, derived from his position as Commander of the Faithful. While the Muslim religion should be respected, there should be no state religion. People should be free to believe and not to believe. The Royal Moroccan Armed Forces should certainly go - replace it with a popular militia which elects its own officers.

Though we support the integration of Ceuta into Morocco, we do not extend that to the Western Sahara, the so-called Southern Provinces - another former Spanish colony. Most of the territory was seized by Morocco in 1975 when Spain withdrew. It should be up to the Saharawi people whether they want to join with Morocco or to declare independence - as long demanded by the Polisario Front ●

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YOUR PARTY

Aping Harvey Weinstein

Demanding that elected members of the central executive committee sign non-disclosure agreements is surely a sign of complete political, moral and organisational bankruptcy, says **Carla Roberts**. Jeremy Corbyn and Karie Murphy ought to hang their heads in shame

You have got to hand it to Karie Murphy - Jeremy Corbyn's right-hand woman always has a surprise up her sleeve. On July 23, all members of the Your Party central executive committee received an email from secretary Dawn Aspinall, informing them that they would finally be issued with their own Your Party email addresses - a staggering six months after their election in February 2026. Needless to say, the seven CEC officers (all elected on Corbyn's leadership slate, The Many) already had official YP email addresses.

Why are 'normal' CEC members suddenly being issued with them? Are they finally able to engage in "correspondence with members, staff, volunteers and external organisations", as Aspinall's email states? Will they at last be given access to the membership data? Will they be able to see how many members YP actually has? Get an overview of the party's finances, perhaps?

Of course not. No, this is a classic move by Murphy, the *de facto* general secretary of Your Party. You see, all future CEC correspondence will be sent to this official YP email address - and this email address *only*: "Meeting papers, notices, governance documents, confidential correspondence, voting information and other official party business will be issued to this account. CEC members are therefore asked to check their party email regularly to ensure they do not miss important communications."

Oh, and in order to get access to the email account, all that CEC members have to do is sign a three-page 'non-disclosure agreement'! So, if you want to continue in your role on the CEC, you basically need to sign it, otherwise you will not receive the agenda items, the CEC documents or even the invitation. This is, of course, packaged in terms of "protecting members' data", but there is no question of the seven Grassroots Left members on the CEC suddenly being given access to that kind of information.

No, this is very much about neutering the opposition. As readers of the *Weekly Worker* will know, there has been something of a mini-rebellion on the CEC, after Mel Mullings, Solma Ahmed and Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi (all three elected on the Grassroots Left slate) were suspended on July 4 for attending a meeting of the Socialist Federation (which has now imploded, see below). This made absolutely no sense. For a start, SF is not banned by Your Party - unlike the Socialist Workers Party, whose 'Marxism 2026' event Jeremy Corbyn attended the day *after* the three suspensions. To make matters worse, Naomi had not even attended the SF meeting.

This botched suspension was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back for seven CEC members elected on the slate of Corbyn's leadership faction, The Many, who joined the seven GL members in a 'special CEC meeting' on July 12 to successfully issue motions of no confidence against YP chair Jenn Forbes, secretary Dawn Aspinall and membership officer Cassi Bellingham.

Unfortunately, this rebellion is not based on a position of strength or a suddenly discovered political



Jeremy Corbyn: imposes a nightmare regime

cohesion. It is based on a shared sense of YP having become a real embarrassment, nothing more. YP is staggeringly unsuccessful, the 'branches rollout' is a slow-motion joke, the organisation makes no impact in any election and it remains solidly at 0% in opinion polls. Some CEC members clearly do not want to continue carrying the responsibility for this failing project, especially as most of them have been kept firmly out of the decision-making process.

It is telling that there are three CEC officers among those rebelling: political officer Louise Regan, spokesperson Noor Jahan Begum and treasurer Fadel Takroui. The latter two have resigned their officer posts and, while Takroui remains a member of the CEC, we are hearing that Begum *might* have resigned from the CEC, too. We do not know, because she has not actually told other members - neither has Your Party. She has written a resignation statement, over three weeks ago, which has only just been leaked to the *Canary*.¹ Independent Sam Gorst resigned from the CEC just after the 'special' meeting on July 12; national co-chair Laura Smith a couple of weeks before that.

It is no surprise that this kind of 'opposition' has not been able to achieve very much. Due to the lack of a shared political perspective,

there is no obvious joint way forward. While there is - on paper - a majority of CEC members who now disagree with the trajectory of the party and who want to depose Forbes, Aspinall and Bellingham, they have no mechanisms to enforce that majority. All decisions have - for many months - been taken by the CEC officers, where the Corbyn clique still retains a majority (of one!). Some CEC rebels want to boycott future meetings and make them inquorate - but, then, would the Corbyn clique really care? They have ignored the CEC for months, and would happily continue to do so.

Of course, at the heart of this dilemma is a simple fact: when The Many CEC members were still acting as a loyal bloc, they supported the bureaucratic takeover of YP by the Corbyn clique and simply waved through documents like the dire CEC standing orders,² which are now being used to sideline them.

Gagging orders

Trying to force CEC members to sign NDAs is a rather thinly-veiled attempt to get the opposition to just quit. Which is what many of them are now considering, from what we hear. Very few of them will sign it, we suspect - which is, of course, exactly what Murphy is hoping for. The next YP 'conference' (date still

unknown) will no doubt do away with 'collective leadership' and the CEC anyway.

Karie Murphy could not care less about the potential fallout from any 'mass' resignations on the CEC. Your Party was never supposed to be a mass party anyway. Having been bounced into launching YP by Zarah Sultana, the Corbyn clique has done its best to transform it into the most undemocratic organisation possible - some kind of 'vanity' project that can be easily controlled, just like Momentum (*after* the coup by Jon Lansman, which was supported by Corbyn, we should remember). Corbyn is and remains a Labourite, through and through. He would no doubt do a 'Diane Abbott' and creep back into the Labour Party, all the while apologising for his 'anti-Semitism' - a big lie which had his leadership suffering from Stockholm syndrome and witch-hunting thousands of good leftwingers, many of them, incidentally, Jewish. But Andy Burnham would not allow him back in any case, chiefly because it would not be worth it. Having Corbyn back in the Labour 'family' might get him a couple of percentage points from the Greens, but he would invite a shit storm of humongous proportions from the right and the pro-Zionist lobby.

Incredibly, Jeremy Corbyn has

managed to retain some sort of 'nice man' reputation, despite the utter mess he and Murphy have made of YP. Issuing NDAs to his fellow socialists should go a long way to expose him for the control freak he is. If you were *very* generous, you could argue that political parties use NDAs to protect members' data and such. But you would be wrong, as this is already covered by data protection laws.

No, NDAs are usually issued to stop (departing) staff from blowing the whistle. The Labour Party, for example, has used settlement agreements containing confidentiality clauses when parting ways with employees, including in cases involving complaints of bullying, racism and sexual harassment. Many trade unions do the same. It has become a common way to stop the bureaucracy from being exposed. Worse, the Harvey Weinsteins of this world use NDAs to hide their horrendous crimes. Signing it is usually linked with some kind of (extra) payout to the victim to keep shunt and stop them pressing legal charges.

In other words, NDAs are there to protect perpetrators, criminals and those with things to hide. Any socialist party worthy of the name should have absolutely nothing to do with such methods.

Getting the elected members of a leadership body (not just staff) to sign an NDA is taking things even further. We understand that the Labour Party at one stage *tried* to get members of its (elected) national executive to sign NDAs - but this did not go down well at all and they had to back off. Quite right too. CEC members should be accountable only to those who elected them. It is the staff who should be accountable to those elected, not the other way around! But then again, Your Party CEC members still have not even been told who actually is on the staff! Incredibly, the Corbyn Party is much, much less democratic than even the Labour Party - and that after the Keir Starmer regime had its way with it.

We do not know if YP staff too have been presented with NDAs - probably. Certainly not Karie Murphy herself though, who would quickly be found 'in breach' for constantly leaking to the bourgeois press. Needless to say, the NDA is packed with references to CEC members having to keep things "confidential". They would have to commit themselves to "not share, disclose, copy or distribute information without permission" and to "protect confidential information", which "includes information relating to members, supporters, internal activities and elections".

Under point 2, "What is Confidential Information?", we read that, next to things like 'membership records', this also includes "any information marked or reasonably understood to be confidential". In the past, that has included things like whole CEC agendas, and pretty much all documents and reports produced by the officers' group, including the CEC standing orders. Everything, in other words.

Openness

You might wonder why you have to read the *Weekly Worker* to find out about these NDAs. We are wondering, too. In fact, we have been waiting for some kind of public statement from the opposition, telling Karie Murphy to shove her NDAs where the sun don't shine. Alas, there is only silence. This is, unfortunately, not just down to the fact that the opposition is politically incoherent. Most CEC members are subordinating themselves to the NDA - without having signed it. In fact, they have been enforcing Murphy's requests for confidentiality without as much as a peep, for many months.

Unfortunately, that very much includes the majority of the Grassroots Left supporters on the CEC. They produce factual, pretty dull reports of CEC meetings, but these are being published less and less frequently. Anything marked 'confidential' has been kept from the members, leaving it to the *Weekly Worker* to publish all the CEC documents that we can get hold of - very much against the wishes of most GL members, we should say. In fact, we have been vilified as "toxic bullies" for arguing that everything should be out in the open and have been accused of "sabotage" when we did publish documents. Our fight for transparency has been dismissed as a "cheap way to try and increase the *Weekly Worker* circulation".

No, we insist on transparency and openness because they are quite clearly the main methods with which to build an actual, democratic mass party, where the members are in charge, not the bureaucracy. Surely, members must be able to see what their elected leaders are up to, who is arguing what on the leadership body and who is moving which policy document forward. Anything else places the power in the hands of the

bureaucrats, not the members.

We would have much preferred it if GL had published all these papers. After all, that might have given GL a fighting chance to become a worthwhile opposition in Your Party, which would have been much better for the left (and us). Instead, most GL CEC members supported holding Grassroots Left meetings in closed sessions, having a ban on reporting on them - and there was even a proposal for an entirely bizarre code of conduct (written by Candi Williams)³ that would have made the organisations which initially made up the GL *accountable to the elected CEC members* - rather than the other way around!⁴ No wonder GL has imploded. The GL CEC members are doing their own thing now, as individuals, without any mechanism for those who elected them to hold them to account.

For example, we would take serious issue with the decision by Mel Mullings, Solma Ahmed and Candi Williams to continue to pursue a "round-table discussion on anti-racism" - with YP secretary Dawn Aspinall (the person who sent out the NDA!) in the lead. We understand some fellow CEC members advised against that - quite right. GL CEC members claim correctly that after the no-confidence vote against her, Aspinall is in the post illegitimately. Surely it is pretty daft to then confirm her legitimacy by helping her to organise such an event! The three GL comrades would no doubt claim that the need to fight against racism trumps all of that. This is the kind of serious political mistake that happens when you subscribe to identity politics. The comrades are signposting that they are not a serious opposition at all and can be easily incorporated into the YP bureaucracy, with the smallest of crumbs.

Socialist Federation

One of those driving this campaign against transparency and openness was Richard Gerrard, former leader of the small Trotskyist sect, Workers Power. He was acting as a sort of legal adviser/attack dog for the GL CEC members for a while and went on to set up the Socialist Federation.

He was also very keen to jump on the anti-CPGB bandwagon in the wake of the 'N-word affair', pretending to be unable to distinguish between *discussing racism* and *being racist*. He enforced speech controls on the various WhatsApp groups he controls, deleting a number of *Weekly Worker* articles, for example. In the group of the Grassroots Left, he organised a poll that asked, "Should we prohibit racial slurs and articles containing racial slurs?" 34 out of the 222 people still in the group bothered to click 'yes' to his daft leading question. In other words, in his campaign against the *Weekly Worker*, he fully embraced identity politics, speech controls and banning people for thinking or saying the wrong thing. He was also the first to call us "toxic bullies".

We did point out, repeatedly, not just how wrong this campaign against an open culture of debate and transparency was generally - but that it was, in Gerrard's case, also rather hypocritical, seeing as he holds a so-called "materialist" view on the trans question that is entirely out of step with the majority of the members of the Socialist Federation, who are steeped deeply in identity politics. All too predictably, chickens have now come home to roost. It is only a matter of time until the speech controls you support *against others* bite you yourself in the bum.

On the morning of August 3, all SF supporters received a personal email from Gerrard, who informed them that he has "decided to stand

down as an officer of the Socialist Federation". He goes on to explain:

Our weekly volunteers' meeting last Thursday took it upon itself to ban our volunteers from expressing disagreement, publicly or internally within the volunteers' team, on a question of personal belief that sits outside the Points of Unity ... As you know, our Points of Unity include a shared commitment to transgender liberation. The interim platform of the Socialist Federation, which I drafted, reiterates that commitment.

However, a majority of our volunteer group now interpret that commitment as imposing a specific view - beyond anything in the Points of Unity - about the nature of biological sex, its mutability, and its relation to gender. What is more, at Thursday's volunteers meeting - which I was unable to attend - a majority decided to ban volunteers from expressing any differing opinion to theirs on the nature and mutability of biological sex. I believe it is inappropriate and self-defeating for the volunteers to dictate what members of the team can or can't say on such questions.

He is a bit vague on the details, but we think we have been able to cobble together what happened. There have been arguments over the 'trans question' brewing for many weeks. It appears that the issue finally exploded when Will McMahon (who many *Weekly Worker* readers will know - he was involved in the Socialist Alliance and for a while worked with Nick Wrack in Talking about Socialism) attended an 'onboarding call' in order to be allowed to help out as a 'volunteer' for the SF. Such volunteers basically make up the highest decision-making body of SF and there are currently a grand total of 22 of them, we understand. In that meeting, the two interviewers seem to have veered rather off script, asking comrade McMahon some leading questions about his views on the trans question - it appears they knew that he too shares a "gender-critical viewpoint".

Trans question

James Kulmar has since explained in a WhatsApp group that Will McMahon "responded with two statements: 1. People can't change their sex. 2. Trans women aren't women. This was flagged (rightly so) because of the unprompted nature of the comments and severity of them in light of the question posed."

We have reached out to comrade McMahon to ask him if these statements were correctly relayed and if he really made them "unprompted" - which seems rather unlikely (we are still waiting for a reply). Kulmar goes on to explain that a volunteers' meeting then decided:

... we should not onboard that individual as a volunteer, not because of their particular views on sex or gender, but because of the nature of the interjection and the risk of creating an unsafe work environment. In the meeting, which was impassioned, but honestly very comradely, a proposal was put forward that had two components: 1. We should require onboarded volunteers to respect pronouns. 2. We should require onboarded volunteers to not proclaim, 'trans women are not women' in public or at SF events.

This was agreed. On the evening of Monday August 3 then, after Richard Gerrard sent out his personal email,

there was an 'emergency volunteers meeting', which was attended by 15 of the 22 volunteers. Nine of them voted to expel Gerrard from the Socialist Federation altogether - its founder and leading member. The meeting also voted to suspend June Tobin, who had been elected to run the SF 'oversight committee' and who dared to point out that there are no complaints procedures in place that she and Gerrard could appeal to. She too has been labelled a transphobe in the process and is subject to an investigation. Unlike Gerrard, she will not resign: "Let the fuckers vote me out", she told us.

Red lines

Of course, you can have terribly bureaucratic organisations that do not officially subscribe to identity politics - and SF was definitely one of those. Focusing on 'action, action, action' (with nobody actually doing anything about the 'mass campaigns' they had decided upon), there was a real lack of discussion on the politics or the programme of the 'organisation', with speeches limited to three minutes at its grandly-titled 'conferences' and the forced merging of entirely different political position papers into, well, utter nonsense. Important political differences have been simply brushed under the carpet, as we have just seen.

But, now that a commitment to identity politics has been made and a particular view on the trans question expressed, this requires a whole other level of bureaucracy, with mechanisms to ensure that nobody does or says anything that somebody else might feel is 'wrong' or 'offensive'. There will have to be speech controls, no-platforming and surely more expulsions for having the wrong viewpoint. There will need to be committees to decide what happens when somebody commits such a thought crime and says the wrong thing. There will need to be appeals committees, codes of conduct etc, etc. A bureaucratic nightmare - especially for an organisation with 22 volunteers. The SF conference, scheduled for early September, has already been "postponed", indefinitely for now.⁵ We would be very surprised if it ever takes place. Good riddance.

While we do not agree with the attitude of Gerrard and McMahon on the trans question, enforcing a particular viewpoint on such a contested question can only build you a sect - if that. Whole organisations on the left have been split apart by the issue, and there are hundreds, if not thousands, of long-standing socialists who share the view of Gerrard and McMahon. To simply say that 'the issue is not up for debate', as many trans activists and their supporters do, is just simply idiotic - for the simple reason that *it is very much being debated*.

It should therefore not be the kind of 'red line' that, for example, the question of pro-imperialism is. A real, principled party of the working class has to be able to firmly oppose any form of state loyalism, which, say, includes support for what the UK and US governments are doing in Ukraine and the Middle East. That clearly is a class question, which pits the interests of the working class very clearly against those of the ruling class. Any organisation that calls on the British state to send more weapons or tax money to Volodymyr Zelensky is actively siding with our own bourgeoisie.

However, the trans question is a rather different category. For a start, it is not a clear-cut 'class question', as both the ruling class and the working class are split on the issue. Of course, we are obliged to oppose the April 2025 Supreme Court landmark ruling stating that the terms

'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer strictly to biological sex, meaning trans women do not legally qualify as women under those specific statutory protections. This was a frontal assault on transexual men and women and an essentially biblical judgement: god created men and women. But sex is not only biological, it is social. Therefore someone born 'female' can indeed become 'male' because they are socially accepted as male (surgery and drugs are modern innovations).

To celebrate the Supreme Court ruling, as does the *Morning Star's* Communist Party of Britain, is to cross a class line. But there is room for debate on a number of issues around the 'trans question'.

Either way, most of the left, including so-called 'terfs', are pretty much united in the need to show active *solidarity*: we defend and seek to advance the rights of trans people, we oppose bigoted attacks on them and also surely oppose the policing of toilets in the wake of the code published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which came into force on August 5.

Also, it is worth adding - contrary to what some trans activists claim - that people like Gerrard and McMahon do not 'deny the existence of trans people'. This is just hyperbolic nonsense.

As it says in the introduction to our theses on the question, when it comes to our organisations, we should concentrate on practical acts of solidarity. This means we must:

stand unequivocally against the fraudulent rightwing witch-hunt of trans people, and campaign for the liberation of trans people from their present-day oppression, without accepting the framework of 'intersectionalist', tail-endist politics. Equally, and connected to this, it is not necessary to commit to arguments for the social construction of biology, which logically entail the truth of subjective marginal utility economics (and thus that unemployment is caused by workers' unreasonable refusal to accept below-subsistence wages). Nor is it necessary to believe that gender non-conformity is in itself revolutionary. Nor to commit to the psycho-babble language of 'transphobia' (or homophobia or Islamophobia), which, precisely by their over-psychiatrising character, destroy the space for rational disagreement. Nor to imagine that no-platforming 'terfs' is a productive policy.⁶

If we are serious about building a real *mass* working class party, we have to be able to allow discussion and debate on this question (and many others) - not enforce speech controls for *thinking* or *saying* the wrong thing. We do not need moral condemnation and bureaucratic censure, but candid and open discussion that seeks to defeat wrong ideas, such as transphobia and the dead-end sectionalism of identity politics ●

Notes

- 1. www.thecanary.co/skawwkbbox/2026/08/04/your-party-noor-jahan-begum-leaves.
- 2. docs.google.com/document/d/14F5EXEnhQCy36KUBeVKqqGanmwgiwumDuVTEpHTW18/edit?usp=sharing.
- 3. docs.google.com/document/d/1KrUNTgAJZSDldRpmjztjh9-jRYfQQmsplphmrGvgNCU/edit?usp=sharing.
- 4. 'We need light and air' *Weekly Worker* March 19 2026: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1577/we-need-light-and-air.
- 5. docs.zoom.us/doc/3YnsY9kaRdSLdaOgRJNhYQ.
- 6. 'Communism and trans liberation' *Weekly Worker* November 13 2025: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1561/communism-and-trans-liberation.

INTERNATIONAL

World order in disorder

Has Iran won its war with America? Has China's century arrived? What about Russia and the war in Ukraine? **Yassamine Mather** interviewed **Mike Macnair** for the leftwing Iranian online channel, Jonbesh TV

YM: At the beginning of the war, many analysts, including some western strategists, did not expect Iran's military to show such resilience. How do you assess the confrontation and its outcome on the ground? More broadly, did the war mark a real shift in the balance of power, or did it mainly confirm your earlier view that direct military intervention pushes the American hegemon deeper into an irrational, attritional quagmire?

I'm going to add one minor point here. Can you talk about those who argue that Iran has won this war, both amongst the international left, but also amongst commentators, academics and so on.

MM: The short answer is that it's still very much too soon to tell. The idea that bombing was just going to straightforwardly knock down the Iranian armed forces was never a terribly plausible story. It reflects lobbying from Israel on the basis of their narrative of the extreme fragility of the Islamic Republic, which was supposed to be capable of being knocked down by small-scale interventions; and also 'airforce lobbying' of a kind which has occurred episodically since the 1920s - the belief that air power is sufficient to win wars.

That said, the other side of it is the Ukraine war, which is inextricably interlinked with the current war against Iran. In Ukraine, the US has been pursuing a policy of prolonged attritional warfare. And it's not a 'quagmire' for the US to pursue such a policy, because the underlying situation of the US is radical dominance of global arms production. Which means that usually, at the end of the day, the US is going to be able to carry on bombing, carry on blockading and carry on with sanctions until the point when it finally exhausts its opponents.

The consequence is that assessment. We've had a series of 'Iran has won' stories: the war is over and Iran has won; the US has had to give up. The Memorandum of Understanding was the clearest one. But, at the same time, actually, it's quite clear that the war is ongoing, that major strikes have carried on. Netanyahu was reported in *The Times*, before his meeting with Trump, saying he was going to urge that there should be no end to the war until there was regime change in Iran.

So it's a bit like judging World War I at the end of 1914, and concluding that Germany is winning. So I'm not going to say Iran absolutely isn't winning, but I think that, for Iran to *actually* win, we'd need to be talking about sinking the US fleet, rather than merely surviving under attack.

In one sense, survival is 'winning', but in another sense, it's not, because it's still the case that the world hegemon has the power to make life intolerable for you, has the power to inflict total destruction of infrastructure, has the power, eventually, to 'Somalianise', 'Libyanise' or 'Syrianise' its target states. It will take longer to do that, when it comes to the Islamic Republic, but at the end of the day the US *can* do it (that is, unless the US is actually militarily defeated).

I said, by sinking the US fleet. But it could equally be the case that, if the whole of the region goes up in flames, if the Egyptian, Jordanian and Saudi regimes fall, then the US would be induced to back off - as Britain backed off on the question of Jewish settlements in the 1930s, when



Iran has survived, but the cost has been huge

the whole of the Arab area (not just Palestine) went up in flames.

So, as I began by saying, 'don't know' is the right answer to this question.

Multipolar

YM: You have argued against those sections of the left who are optimistic about a multipolar world order. You said that global capitalism still requires a hegemonic power, that multipolarity is a shortcut to world war. With the genocide in Gaza, devastation in southern Lebanon, tensions in the Red Sea, the war against Iran and the widening regional spillover of these conflicts, do you think we are entering the practical phase of that crisis? Have we moved to a situation where we can say there is multipolar anarchy, but not multipolar order?

MM: Well, it's certainly the case that we haven't moved into multipolar order, because multipolar order would imply the US backing down and accepting spheres of influence for the other major powers, and creating something like the 1815 Congress of Vienna agreement, or that of the 1884-85 Berlin Conference.

Equally, we haven't moved into multipolar anarchy of the sort which one can argue existed between 1918 and 1939-40. The reason for that is the fact that we only entered into multipolar anarchy when it became clear that the UK was not capable of winning the 1914-18 war against Germany without US assistance; and then the consequence at Versailles, that the unwillingness of the US to let Britain and France off their debt obligations to the US in connection with the purchase of armaments in 1914-18 meant that Britain and France had to demand reparations from Germany and Austria, which produced ongoing instability. This condition of multipolar anarchy is caused by the fact that the war of 1914-18 did not yet *knock over* British world dominance. In 1940, the fall of France, Scandinavia

and the Low Countries in spring 1940 knocked over the structural basis of British world hegemony and made the British actually dependent on the US. However, 1914-18 did create a condition of anarchy, which persisted until the conflict was resolved in 1939-45 - so we aren't into that yet.

I want to be a bit cautious about this. I don't *think* we are on the verge of a new 1914 (in which China, aggressively encircled by the USA and its vassals, would play the role of the Kaiser-Reich, aggressively encircled by the UK and its vassals in the early 1900s). But there's a sense in which we *may* be near a new 1914. And in that case, we should analyse this chaos in the Middle East as being analogous to the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. These were the precursors to 1914, but not yet the outbreak of a world war.

YM: That's very useful. Some argue that Russia and China are using Iran and other regional actors as a kind of geopolitical buffer: a kind of shield to absorb pressure that is coming from the west. I think you argued previously that China is currently not in a position to become the alternative hegemon. How do you read the current strategy pursued by Xi Jinping? Is China trying to build a new order, or simply securing a larger share of the existing disorder?

MM: I think we need to treat Russia and China separately. Apart from possessing nuclear weapons, Russia is very much a second-rank power. It is, in fact, not even properly characterised as sub-imperialist, I think. If Russia wins the war in Ukraine, and the US is unambiguously defeated, *then* Russia could become an imperialist power, but at the moment it definitely isn't winning, and what seems to be on the agenda is actually the colonisation of Russia. We need to think of Putin from this point of view as analogous to Tipu Sultan, who was allegedly, in the British press, the great aggressor against the East India Company in the 1790s.

The US is seeking, and indeed actually succeeding, to drive Russia's naval assets out of the Black Sea. It is seeking to get control of the Donbass, the Caucasus, and so on, and thereby the Caspian Sea. It is seeking also to trigger regime change in Moscow (the creation of a 'new Yeltsin') and, as a result of that, a break-up of the Russian Federation and the creation of a series of small states, which the US will be able to control directly - thereby enabling US control of what Halford Mackinder called the heartland (which means, essentially, the Caucasus, the Caspian, central Asia. The Putin administration is pursuing a defensive struggle against this existential threat from the US.

China is in a very different situation. China has been becoming more and more capitalist. I don't think I'm going to say it's completely capitalist, because it's a complicated story, and it's still got large state-controlled corporations, and a government that is more autonomous from capital than either 'western' or 'southern' states. China is unlike Russia, in the sense that, all the way through being a 'communist regime', there was an external financial capitalist class operating in Hong Kong and in Singapore, which, since the 1980s, has been, to a greater or lesser extent, reintegrated into Chinese capitalism. It was always a country with a much higher level of the *forces* of production than Russia.

Hence, in essence, in becoming more and more capitalist, China is driven towards imperialist operations, in the same way that the German Kaiserreich in the late 19th century was driven towards imperialism by virtue of capitalist industrialisation, and, in particular, the heavy industry sector became major lobbyists for German overseas investments and so on. China is driven towards overseas investments. It's also driven towards competition with the United States at the highest of high-tech levels (again,

just like the Kaiserreich was driven towards technical competition with the UK in the late 19th century).

It still remains the case that the US is absolutely dominant. It's more dominant in the world than the UK was in the later 19th century. So I don't think that Beijing is at present in a position to become an alternative hegemon. I do think Beijing could become, like the Kaiserreich, the battering ram which breaks down US hegemony, and forces the US into a more equal relationship with the European capitalist powers. But, at the moment, we're nowhere near that sort of situation. And it's clear, equally, that talk of India becoming a potential hegemon power is just not plausible.

So, are the Chinese trying to secure a larger share of the existing disorder? That, I think, attributes too much aggressive quality to what they're doing. If we think about the Chinese navy, it's been extended and pursued basing rights, because China has been drawn into overseas investments. But also, actually, because the US has pulled back from policing piracy - so that other states with large trade investments and large shipping industries have to pursue their own anti-piracy measures. Again, very similar to the dynamics of the later 19th century, in which the British navy, because of the enormous cost of Britain maintaining a navy bigger than the next two navies together, etc, began to pull back on 'anti-piracy' work, which depended on smaller ships, and more of them, and so on; and then other powers - France, the USA, Germany, etc - were driven to expand their own naval power to protect their own shipping.

The formulation of the question is, then, unhelpful.

Anti-imperialist

YM: Obviously, now we have the Houthis, who have declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea. They are considering a system of tolls on commercial shipping. You have argued that US military doctrine depends on control, and this control includes strategic energy and trade routes. At a time when competition over transit corridors has become a burning issue, these asymmetric forces have managed to challenge America's control over the flow of goods and energy. What is the class character of the forces in Yemen and Iraq? Would you consider them anti-imperialist, or militia-based actors seeking a share of regional trade routes?

MM: The first point is: is this a challenge to the US? My view of what the US needs is *veto* control. That is, not the ability to turn *on* the taps, but the ability to turn them *off*. And Iran (or for that matter the Houthis) turning off the taps themselves is not a challenge to the United States' geostrategic control.

The US is self-sufficient in petrochemicals. Okay, it's a bit more complicated, but it's certainly not the case that the US *itself* needs oil to flow from the Gulf. Turning off the oil taps damages the Europeans, it damages China, it damages Japan, it damages the far-eastern countries more generally, but it doesn't directly damage the US - unless its vassal states are so pissed off with its failure to turn the oil taps on that they rebel, which they aren't doing at the moment.

If we were expecting to see a European or Japanese rebellion against the USA, we would expect to see a totally different sort of

nationalism, as opposed to Alternative für Deutschland, Meloni, etc. These guys are Atlanticists. They may want to shift the balance a little bit, but they're basically acting in the interests of the US, not *against* its interests.

The idea that this challenges the US is part of the left's belief that Iran is defeating the US. It's a misconception of what the US interest is in this stuff. The US interest is in holding its rivals in the 'advanced capitalist' countries in subordination. And that is achieved by closing off their access to oil. And here, in particular, we're concerned with closing off Chinese access to oil. It doesn't matter, from the point of view of the US, whether it's the US which closes off the access, or whether it's Iran and its allies in attempting to coerce the US.

Second question: an anti-imperialist movement, or simply militia-based actors seeking a share of regional trade routes? I think that's a false counterposition. There is a sense in which nothing can be anti-imperialist which is not posing some positive alternative to the global regime of imperialism, and, in that sense, when the Islamic Republic says it is not anti-imperialist, that is perfectly accurate. The Islamic Republic is seeking a higher position in the global hierarchy, not to get rid of that global hierarchy altogether. By contrast, communists historically - and, in fact, including the 'official communists' in the period before 1991 - seek to get rid of global hierarchy altogether. So, in that sense, these are not anti-imperialist movements.

In another sense, however, when we think of Comintern and what was called the 'anti-imperialist united front', these movements *are* to be understood as anti-imperialist, even if they do not claim the name. The early Comintern idea of the anti-imperialist united front was an extension onto the global scale of the worker-peasant alliance that took power in Russia in 1917. The idea was that the working class, as an international class, and the Soviet Union, ally with nationalists against imperialism (principally British imperialism). Hence the 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East, and at that event Zinoviev presenting what the Comintern was doing as a kind of jihad.

The underlying idea was not just Zinoviev's. It was the line agreed at the second, third and fourth congresses of Comintern on the national and colonial question. It was a geostrategic orientation, which sought an alliance between the Soviet republic, the workers' movement, and the nationalist movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

This was a plausible orientation, and indeed continued to be a plausible orientation right down to the 1970s. The Soviet Union post-1945 added to 'actually existing socialism' eastern Europe and North Korea. Revolutions under the Soviet aegis added Yugoslavia, Albania, China, North Vietnam, and later Cuba and South Yemen. And beyond these, there was a large range of more or less leftwing nationalist governments of one form or another. So this looked like a plausible strategy. But then the US found the way to take it down in the 1970s - taking it apart through offering bank-syndicated lending as a road to development, as an alternative to import substitution under import controls, and bilateral trade and aid relations.

At the same time, the Soviet Union's economy and state budget were falling apart, due to the combination of the internal planning irrationalities, based on the complete dominance of lies, and the external pressure of the costs of military competition with the US and its vassal states. This created conditions in which extending the 'socialist bloc' and the 'anti-imperialist front' ceased to be a serious

practical option. This was already visible in the effective unwillingness of the USSR to go beyond ideological support in the 'anti-imperialist front' in relation to the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions; which in Iran meant ideological support for the repression of local communists and the workers' movement. The strategic option of extending the 'socialist bloc' and 'anti-imperialist front' ceased completely to be a serious practical option with the collapse of the USSR and eastern European Soviet-style regimes, of course.

What I have just said about China implies that attempting to place it in the role of the USSR is therefore wildly unrealistic.

The early Comintern talked about the Indonesian Islamist movement as anti-imperialist, though it would never have called itself anti-imperialist. The same is true of Enver Pasha and his pan-Turkism, where the alliance went to the extent of Enver participating in the Congress of the Peoples of the East. These Islamist and nationalist movements were not seeking an end to global hierarchy, but merely to raise the positions of their own country in the global hierarchy. This was, of course, also true of the peasants in Russia or in China: they weren't actually seeking an abolition of social hierarchy, which was inconsistent with the character of peasant proprietors as patriarchal exploiters of family labour and as employers. They were seeking to improve their own position in the social hierarchy. That, however, wanders a long way from the question.

YM: One problem is that because they don't challenge the world order, they often end up either compromising, as in the case of many of the Arab nationalists of 1960s and so on; or else they might go along a suicidal route - of taking on enemies they are not in a position to defeat - and therefore creating a worse situation in failing to have the support of the masses to take on the imperialist powers.

MM: Yes, that's a good point, and I would add, in a sense, Vietnam is also a counter-example. The US was defeated in Vietnam not just by the military action of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, and not just by the fact that the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were backed by the Soviet Union (which is too often forgotten); but also by the fact that the Vietnamese perspective, as internationally understood, was a communist and universalistic one, which could animate an anti-war movement in the US itself, reaching all the way into its armed forces. In this way, the US could be driven to back off because of the threat of its armed forces falling apart.

Sub-imperialism

YM: Another concept that is put forward internationally and by sections of the left in Iran is the concept of 'sub-imperialism'. This often includes those who criticise 'campism'. It also is used to describe the regional behaviour of Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia ... These countries, according to this definition, are dominated at the global level. However, they still act hegemonically and exploitatively. And as a result, therefore, are sub-imperialist.

First of all, does this concept have any meaning in Marxist political economy? Is it a useful framework? Does it help to call the Islamic Republic of Iran 'sub-imperialist'? Does it make us understand better its contradictions with the west and its bid for a share of the Middle East market? Or does it flatten the complexity of capital accumulation geopolitical systems with simplistic labels?

MM: I'm not going to rule out the use of the category, 'sub-imperialist', and I think there are two good examples. One is the tsarist regime in the late 19th century and down to 1917.

This was characterised by the fact that its economy was dominated by foreign direct investment, meaning substantial financial dependence on the major, core imperialist powers - Britain, France, Germany, etc. But at the same time, tsarist Russia had its own financial structure and banking system. And it exploited as colonial possessions what's now the central Asian republics, but also Siberia, and so on and so forth. Boris Kagarlitsky's *Empire of the periphery* is helpful. So, in that sense, Russia was colonised as far as its core economy was concerned, but its core economy also colonised the subordinate territories!

The second example is Portugal, which is a very different case, because the symbiosis of the Portuguese late feudal state with Genoese financial capital, between roughly the 1420s and into the 1600s, was one of the pioneers of European imperialism. I say 'symbiosis', because you can't talk about the Portuguese state as being a capitalist state at this date, but at the same time, the relationship with the Genoese republic, which undoubtedly was a capitalist state, and Genoese finance capital and shipping industry, created an entity which was a sort of very early form of imperialism.

In 1580 Portugal had a succession crisis and was folded into the Spanish empire. But then, in 1640-60, the Portuguese broke free of Spain - in the last stages essentially under the aegis of the British. The restored royal government in Britain got rid of its inconvenient Cromwellian soldiers in the former New Model Army by sending large numbers of them to Portugal to fight the Spanish in the final stage of the Portuguese war of independence with Spain. The upshot of this is that, although Portugal was no longer a front-rank power, and its metropolitan domestic economy became increasingly colonised by British capital, nonetheless it was also a colonial power, which controlled Brazil until 1822, and Mozambique, Angola and various other colonies until the 1974 revolution.

So we can talk of Portugal right down to the 20th century as a sub-imperialist power, because its economy is colonised at the centre, but it has colonial possessions as a whole of its own, which it exploits in the usual way imperialists do - by exporting capital and getting a return, by financial dependence and by imposing requirements on exports from the colonies for the benefit of the centre, and so on.

However, in the cold war period, there was a very strong tendency for any state which somehow benefited by or was promoted by the central imperialist regimes, and therefore was stronger than other states in the region, to be characterised as 'sub-imperialist'. And this characterisation was exceedingly misleading. I think, if you call Iran 'sub-imperialist', it's sort of *prima facie* evidence that you're arguing in the interests of the US. That confuses two different things: holding other countries in economic subordination for the benefit of the metropolitan economy (which is the essence of capitalist imperialism); and merely having stronger political power and intervening in the affairs of neighbouring countries. You might as well call, say, Tipu Sultan of Mysore a 'sub-imperialist' in the 18th century. This is not serious analysis.

Boundaries

YM: In terms of the current war, we are seeing geographic boundaries collapse. We had Ukraine's entry into confrontation with Iran. There are reports of attacks on Iranian ships in the Caspian Sea. So you could say there is a widening overlap between the eastern European war and west Asian security. At the same time, the Iranian government and its foreign minister appear to be pursuing a

contradictory line: they stress defence, and they are trying to avoid regional escalation, while they're becoming more and more dependent on Russia and China. Can we say that Iran is now trapped in a geopolitical situation that forces it to coordinate, even when that coordination brings it into confrontation with the west beyond the Middle East?

MM: I don't think 'the west' is a useful category. It's basically a self-image of the US and its vassal states, derived, ultimately, from Oswald Spengler and his *Decline of the west*. What you're talking about is actually being brought into sharper confrontation with the US and its vassal states. It's important to recognise that, precisely because before the 2003 invasion of Iraq and before the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance redefinition of anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism, the European powers - particularly France and Germany, and to a lesser extent the UK - pursued independent diplomatic and trade relations with Iran and with the Arab states.

That could happen again. It's just that, in order for it to happen again, there needs to be a political overthrow in Europe of the political institutions by which the US controls the domestic politics of the European countries, around insistence on backing the US settler-colony, Israel.

Talk of a Russia-China axis is problematic. I've already discussed the fact Russia and China are in different situations. Russia is engaged in a war of defence against an existential threat from the US. What China seems to be doing is hoping to survive the adverse effects of the oil embargo, but also to actually outbuild the US in high tech. And there does seem to be some serious perspective of China potentially doing that. At the same time, China is seeking to radically reduce its dependence on petrochemicals, through increased emphasis on renewable energy of one sort or another. Although that doesn't mean that China is actually reducing carbon emissions radically, it does mean that the strategic need for oil is pushed into motor transport and aircraft, rather than applying across the whole economy.

So China is essentially trying to reposition itself to be less dependent on the US. But also to reposition itself in terms of independent diplomatic and trade relations with other countries; to create its own independent payment system, so that it's less dependent on Swift; to draw down slowly, to some extent, its heavy investment in the US for foreign exchange reserves. It wants to do this without going for outright confrontation, whereas the US, on the other hand, is pushing increasingly sharply for aggressive encirclement of China.

In this context, it's worth looking on the website, 'Responsible Statecraft' (a leftish, so-called realist, think tank). Volodymyr Zelensky's big idea for Trump is that Ukraine is the Israel of Europe. The Ukrainian regime is essentially attempting to sell to the US the idea that the Ukrainian regime will become a highly militarised military-industrial complex, immediately dependent on the US, playing the same role in eastern Europe that Israel plays in the Middle East. And the Ukrainian attack on the Iranian ships in the Caspian, although it can be sold as being really an attack on Russian trade, is part of that diplomatic game.

Having said that, it is also the case that this represents the extent to which Ukrainian attacks have reached. It makes the status of Ukraine as a US client into an existential threat to the Russian Federation as a state. This in turn means that any sort of diplomatic deal, founded on freezing the front line or anything like that, no longer makes sense, any more than the two-state solution in Israel-Palestine makes sense: the US has *already achieved*

making Ukraine an institutional base for targeting any part of the Russian Federation, driving the Russian navy out of the Black Sea, and so on.

What this shows us is that the US and its vassals are pursuing an aggressive policy. The participation of the vassals is a very curious thing, because the German state, for example, is pouring vast resources into backing Ukraine, but this is actually at the expense of Germany itself. Emmanuel Macron has been backing Israel in relation to Lebanon, but this is actually at the expense of French interests.

The Europeans are not colonies of the US. But there is US political control of the European states through the EU constitution and inter-state conflicts - in the same way as, before 1860, the UK had political control of the US through slave-owner power. And, in the same period, the UK had political control of Germany through the latter's lack of unity.

Endless war

YM: We've seen significant divisions within the Iranian left, as the war has developed.

We have sections of what I would call the reformist left - some of them with Stalinist backgrounds - who have returned to their post-1979 position of unqualified or near-unqualified support for the Islamic Republic, and argue that the regime's survival is a political achievement that we should celebrate; and that any criticism of Iran is actually a way of supporting the US.

On the other side, we have people who describe themselves as the radical left. I would, however, call them social-imperialist. They say, we can't call this a war of aggression by an imperialist power. Because ...? I assume they think if you go with that description, you inevitably have to support the Islamic Republic, so they don't want to differentiate the attacker state from the attacked state.

Within these groups, we also hear arguments that Iran is equally as culpable about this war as the US and Israel. Why? Because it supported the Palestinians. Because it introduced the nuclear programme, forgetting that this was actually part of the shah's programme - and was completely uncontroversial until the early 2000s, when George Bush decided Iran was part of the 'axis of evil'. It wasn't an issue until then.

MM: We have to break with the assumption that you have to make a choice between alliance with the democratic bourgeoisie and alliance with the national bourgeoisie. The first turns into support for so-called 'democratic' imperialists. Trotsky, repeatedly in the 1920s and 1930s, rightly said that the democracy of the imperialist powers is like the democracy of Athens, which ruled over disenfranchised slaves and women (but also over disenfranchised satellite states in the Aegean) in classical antiquity.

The upshot of the strategic alliance with the 'democratic bourgeoisie' can be seen most clearly in Libya. The Mandeliste Fourth International, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and others argued that we should support British and French military action (leading to US military action) against the Gaddafi regime, for humanitarian reasons. What was the outcome? Not in any sense humanitarian, but just a failed state and endless civil war. This has been a continuous pattern since the US turn in the 1970s, after its defeat in Vietnam, from attempting to 'impose order' to merely inflicting destruction ●

We have edited and considerably cut this interview. For the whole recording, go to: [instagram.com/reel/DbdMUX-gDDV](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DbdMUX-gDDV)

COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY

Day	10:00 - 12 noon	13:00 - 15:00	15:30 - 17:30	18:00-19:00
Saturday August 8	ARRIVE AND BOOK IN	PARTYISM Panel: How to get to the mass Communist Party we need? Mike Macnair, Roxy Hall (Communist Unity, Australia), J Levi (Communist Platform, Netherlands) and Matthew Campbell-Strupp (Marxist Unity Group, USA)	CLIMATE CRISIS Should we support ‘degrowth communism’? Ted Reese	CULTURE Launch of the Diderot Gesellschaft Movement Tam Dean Burn, Esther Leslie, Janne van den Bosch, with Darko Suvin and others via Zoom
Sunday August 9	REVOLUTION Iran war and revolutionary defencism Yassamine Mather	INTERSECTIONALISM What’s wrong with identity politics? Roxy Hall (Communist Unity, Australia)	PARTYISM Socialist Alliance, Your Party, Green Party: why history keeps repeating itself Tina Becker, Marcus Strom (<i>Labor Tribune</i> Australia)	CULTURE Darko Days 1: A sprechgesang exploration of Darko Suvin’s recent essay on the legendary solidarity song O Bella Ciao Tam Dean Burn, Esther Leslie
Monday August 10	IRELAND The rise of rightwing nationalism, Sinn Fein and the collapse of PBP’s left government strategy Anne McShane	ECONOMICS Will AI save capitalism? Michael Roberts	REVOLUTION Lenin and the current double crisis of capitalism and labour. A long view Marcel van der Linden	CULTURE Hegelian alienation in Glasgow spirit and opium Tam Dean Burn, Esther Leslie, Erin Farley, Jan van den Bosch
Tuesday August 11	IRELAND How to make a revolution: the organisational resources that overthrew landlordism in Ireland Marc Mulholland	PROGRAMME Combatting social-imperialism and social-pacifism and the demand for a workers’ militia Floris Boudens (Communist Platform,Netherlands), Marcus Strom	IMPERIALISM Can workers benefit from the exploitation of other workers? Colonial profits and unequal exchange in historical perspective Marcel van der Linden	CULTURE William Burroughs caught in possession of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and metabolic rift Tam Dean Burn
Wednesday August 12	PHILOSOPHY Socialism, virtue and Alasdair MacIntyre Paul Demarty	CLIMATE CRISIS Why just getting rid of capitalism won’t save the planet Jack Conrad	CLIMATE CRISIS Can geo-engineering save the planet? Bill McGuire (professor emeritus of Climate Hazard UCL)	CULTURE Dramatised reading of Bill McGuire’s social science fiction short story ‘The Fix: exploring the potential horrors of geo-engineering’ Bill McGuire and cast
Thursday August 13	CLIMATE CRISIS Past, present and future of our planet’s climate Bill McGure	BOOK LAUNCH USSR: a Marxist post-mortem Jack Conrad	DEBATE Who is working class and why does it matter strategically? Vincent David (Spartacist League), Mike Macnair	CULTURE Darko Days 2: Presentation of poetry and parables by Darko Suvin and fragments of his Brecht Tam Dean Burn, Esther Leslie, Erin Farley, Jan van den Bosch
Friday August 14	HUMAN EVOLUTION The revolutionary origins of language Chris Knight (Radical Anthropology Group)	SOCIETY Noam Chomsky and Jeffrey Epstein Chris Knight (Radical Anthropology Group)	ANTHROPOLOGY ‘Prometheus Bound’ by Aeschylus - reading of the play, and debate: patron saint or menstrual male like Jesus? Camilla Power (Radical Anthropology Group), Darko Suvin and cast	Summer Offensive celebration meal
Saturday August 15	IMPERIALISM Zionism’s colonisation project: where is it heading? Moshé Machover	REVOLUTION Why no-platforming and speech controls strengthen the capitalist state and the right Mike Macnair	EVALUATION OF CU Praise, criticisms and suggestions	



CU is different from the run-of-the-mill schools put on by other left groups, in that plenty of time is allocated to contributions from the floor, controversial debate is positively welcomed and there are no one-minute time limits. Critical thinking is encouraged. For the best experience, come in person, stay overnight and enjoy the comradeship, as well as nearby Regents Park in summertime.

The timetable may be subject to late changes, so check for latest details at communistuniversity.uk/timetable.

Venue and overnight accommodation: International Student House, 229 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5PN. Nearest tube: Great Portland Street. If you can’t attend in person, you can join in the discussions online.

To participate remotely, via Zoom (no fee), register at: <https://tinyurl.com/Communist-University-2026>.

In-person cost: whole week, including accommodation: £250 (£150 unwaged). First/final weekend, including one night’s accommodation: £60 (£30). Full day: £10 (£5). Single session: £5 (£3).

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AUSTRALIA

Beyond whose pale?

Pauline Hanson's far-right One Nation is on the rise. Its politics are undoubtedly bigoted and vile, but are they that different from the bourgeois mainstream? **David Lockwood** warns against simplistic responses

As widely expected, in May the far-right One Nation won the Farrer by-election in Australia, providing them with one more MP - the first elected in their own name to the House of Representatives.¹

This occasioned much hoop-la in One Nation land and corresponding gloom on the left, which soon turned to urgent calls to resist the far right at all costs. "One Nation must be fought relentlessly," wrote Mick Armstrong in Socialist Alternative's *Red Flag*; "a line has to be drawn".² "One Nation are not the same as the Liberals," added the Cliffite *Solidarity*. "One Nation's racism is beyond the pale."³

Admittedly, the 'F' word has not been used thus far, but you can see where this sort of commentary is heading: towards the idea that One Nation is something different in Australian politics and that its members/supporters are a homogenously hateful group - "beyond the pale". The urge from comrades in Solidarity or Socialist Alternative to suggest that One Nation are qualitatively different to, say, National Party leader Matt Canavan or former prime ministers Tony Abbott or John Howard, is to fall into line with a banal liberalism that 'normalises' the reactionary politics of both the Liberal and National Parties. Presumably they are 'inside the pale' of bourgeois respectability - remember, Howard has declared he has "always had trouble" with the concept of multiculturalism.⁴

Undoubtedly, One Nation is to the right of mainstream Australian politics. It is their anti-establishment schtick that appeals to increasingly marginalised parts of the electorate, despite their pro-big-business, pro-Trump-war reality. Even so, they are not that far to the right. We may speculate that many of their supporters have it in for the latest wave of immigrants (Asians from the 1970s, Muslims thereafter), but that hardly marks them out as unique in Australian history or in contemporary society.

In racist terms, much of the case swirls around leader Pauline Hanson's various pronouncements, from her first speech in 1996 ("I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians") to a call to ban Muslim immigrants 20 years later ("a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own").⁵ One Nation supporters are undoubtedly national chauvinist, anti-immigrant, reactionary and rightwing, led from the top by clear racists and spreading out around the edges into various forms of ultra-rightism. But does this make them so very different from the rest of the right?

Their policy tells us that "Australia's immigration system is broken", which means "our population has surged past 27 million". This is now "overwhelming housing, infrastructure and essential services". It has also led to wage stagnation, an end to home ownership and competition with cheap foreign labour. The solution? Deport 75,000 'illegal' immigrants, cut immigration from current levels and conduct a harsh administrative tightening-up of the system (dishonest scheming, student loopholes, no refugees from 'extremist' nations, withdraw from the UN Refugee Convention and so on).

Immigration is not the limit of One Nation's policy ambitions: there is a dose of virulent economic nationalism as well. Hanson told the adoring crowd at the Farrer victory



Pauline Hanson: part of a bourgeois spectrum

celebration that, having "consulted with the industry [naturally] ... I want to put money back into our pockets from the gas industry. They are our resources and they are being given away". She doubled down on this at a recent speech to the Australian Energy Producers conference in Adelaide that *The Guardian* reported was for a "Norway-inspired gas policy".⁶

Right populism

The problems these policies purport to remedy - housing, services, wages, ownership of resources, to name a few - are real enough. To fight One Nation, the left has to address them. Which means going beyond simple denunciation and requires actively proposing a coherent alternative - not just to One Nation but, more importantly, to mainstream capitalist managerialism.

Even on immigration, One Nation's positions are becoming less and less unique. After his speech on immigration policy last March, One Nation's Pauline Hanson thanked Liberal Party leader of the opposition Angus Taylor for picking up a couple of her policies. Taylor had declared that immigration numbers must be drastically reduced "to protect our way of life - and to restore Australia's standard of living".

Under a Liberal government, immigrants would be judged on the basis of their beliefs, and that judgement would be used as a control mechanism. He asserted that "those who migrate from liberal democracies have a greater likelihood of subscribing to Australian values, compared to those migrating from places ruled

by fundamentalists, extremists and dictators". The overt racism was not there, but the implication for Arabs and Muslims certainly was.

More recently, the Liberals have warned that under their government non-citizens (permanent residents) would be barred from access to welfare payments (as yet unspecified) and future eligibility for the National Disability Insurance Scheme funding (1.2 million people were eligible since 2000 alone). Taylor's budget reply maintained that "taxpayer-funded support should be there first and foremost for Australians"⁷ (He did not note that permanent residents pay taxes.)

On such matters, perhaps One Nation is not so very different after all. In a stunning speech to the South Australian parliament, new One Nation MP Jason Virgo proudly discussed his relationship with a male Muslim partner who is a migrant from Indonesia: "I love migrants," he told the parliament. "The overwhelming majority are simply searching for a better life. But two things can be true at once and I do believe migration levels in recent years have been too high."⁸

As One Nation 'surges', all manner of people could be washed into parliaments. Some of them might even remain One Nation MPs. While that is a circle for Pauline Hanson to square, it shows that One Nation is not simply attracting racist boneheads. To build a coherent response, the left must understand this.

If, you see, One Nation was simply attracting racists and semi-Nazis - if a line has to be drawn and no quarter

given - then the implication may be that the way we oppose them has to be different as well. If we are dealing with squads of middle-aged, regional neo-Nazis who are 'beyond the pale', perhaps appeals to reason and determined organisation in marginal and working class communities may not be the correct response. What could be called for is the mobilisation (on the streets, of course) of all decent elements of society against 'the fascists', wherever they raise their heads. Popular fronts could raise *their* head.

While this approach might work to coalesce new student recruits who want to 'fight the right', it is no way to address the emergence of far-right populism. While much of the shift to One Nation results from Pauline Hanson cannibalising the Liberal and National voter base, there is some shift from Anglo and more recent immigrant working class voters and, as Jason Virgo shows, all manner of political viewpoints disillusioned with the establishment.

Given this complexity, we would suggest that simply mobilising on the streets to 'fight the right' and shouting 'racists' at every One Nation election volunteer is what *not* to do. Such a simplistic approach concedes the argument around housing, services and wages to the right.

We have solutions to these problems that require a socialist society and those solutions should be the main focus of our attack. Secondly, by demonising One Nation supporters and their concerns about life in capitalist Australia it becomes more difficult to undermine their prejudices about immigrants. Thirdly, the voting figures indicate that One Nation has some support among workers and immigrants. This cannot be wished away by one more march or rally ●

Article was first published in *Labor Tribune* (labortribune.net.au/one-nation-beyond-whose-pale)

Notes

1. Bernard Keane comments: "... it will never hold the seat for a full term. As is now well known, the chances are against Pauline Hanson's party even holding the seat until the next general election, given the long history of its successful electoral candidates departing in a huff" ("One Nation's bubble hasn't burst" *Crikey* May 5). We shall see.
2. redflag.org.au/article/we-have-to-fight-not-accommodate-one-nation-and-the-far-right.
3. solidarity.net.au/australia/one-nation-surge-in-sa-election-shows-need-for-a-fight-against-racism-and-right-wing-labor.
4. www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/nov/02/john-howard-multiculturalism-comments-alliance-for-responsible-citizenship-conference-london.
5. www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-14/one-nation-senator-pauline-hanson-makes-first-speech-to-senate/7845150.
6. www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/may/21/pauline-hanson-announces-norway-inspired-gas-policy-as-she-decries-25-export-tax-as-economic-vandalism.
7. www.liberal.org.au/our-plan.
8. www.news.com.au/finance/culture/inside-parliament/i-love-migrants-one-nation-mp-jason-irigoien-breaks-down-during-maiden-speech-in-south-australia-parliament/news-story/9ef1ce4ab116183b2141b7b66c858d1e.

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What we fight for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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weekly worker

Take football
out of the
hands of the
rich and
powerful

Infantino's botched coup

FIFA's president has survived for the moment, but his attempt to sell off the World Cup spectacularly backfired. **Carl Collins** says communists can organise supporters to take control of the beautiful game

During the 2026 World Cup we analysed the relentless monetisation and commercialisation of football. From ever-expanding sponsorship deals to political involvement in the tournament, we argued that the world's most popular sport is increasingly treated not as a cultural institution belonging to the millions who sustain it, but as a commodity being exploited by capital.

A week after the final, many supporters would ordinarily have been taking a breather before the return of domestic football. Some may have had one eye on rumours that Argentina could face punishment for the violence witnessed at the end of the final, while many would be fixed on the annual transfer circus, as increasingly absurd sums of money changed hands between clubs yet again.

The next major football story, however, concerned a leaked proposal to allow private investors to purchase a stake in the commercial empire of global football's ruling body, FIFA - 'selling off the World Cup' was the description in various newspapers.

Reports in *The Times* and *Financial Times* revealed plans for a new commercial vehicle, through which outside investors would be invited to (further) profit from FIFA competitions. The leaked plans caught FIFA and its president Gianni Infantino off guard, forcing the release of a lengthy statement defending the proposals before it had intended to do so.

Corporate structure

The new entity, to be called FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), would consolidate virtually every aspect of FIFA's commercial activities. Broadcast rights, sponsorship, ticketing, licensing and the operational delivery of tournaments would all be brought together under one corporate structure. FIFA insisted that it would "retain sole control" of FFE, while inviting 'carefully selected' third parties to make "minority, non-controlling investments", chosen according to "long-term governance and strategic criteria".

The response also confirmed the suggestion in *The Times* that the proposed overseer of the project would be Joshua Kushner, the venture capitalist and brother of Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's son-in-law. The Trump administration's attempts to bend the World Cup to its own political ends have already been well documented in these pages. From Trump's efforts to steal the limelight during the final to reports that he personally telephoned Infantino in a successful attempt to overturn a red card shown to USA striker Folarin Balogun. The White House treated football as just another arena in which political influence could be exercised. The administration's visa restrictions affected supporters and football personnel from several countries, most notably Iran, in the lead-up to the



Two presidents

tournament.

FIFA's public defence of the proposals has rested almost entirely upon promises of redistribution. According to sources speaking to *Guardian* journalists, investors would not receive dividend payments from FFE, although they would be free to sell their stake in future, should its value appreciate. Instead, FIFA argues that outside investment would unlock greater funding for national associations.

The governing body claims every member association choosing to participate could receive an optional additional \$20 million. Annual distributions would supposedly increase, while a staggering \$10 billion in extra funding would eventually be shared across world football.

On paper this appears generous. In practice it illustrates the dependency FIFA itself has cultivated. There are 211 member associations, many of which already rely heavily upon FIFA grants simply to maintain basic football operations. Infantino himself boasted earlier this year that without FIFA "there would be no football in 150 countries in the world". If that is true, then the promise of another \$20 million hardly represents a free democratic choice. Financially dependent associations are hardly likely to reject the organisation's preferred commercial strategy.

This is not the first attempt to deepen football's relationship with global finance. In 2018 Infantino announced a partnership with the Japanese investment giant, SoftBank, to bankroll an expanded Club World Cup. That proposal collapsed amid fierce resistance from clubs, confederations and football administrators who feared both the

concentration of commercial power and the implications for the football calendar.

Despite facing huge pressure, not least from UEFA, Infantino has managed to hang on and keep his job. Nevertheless, there is still a floodtide of opposition. His chief advisor has resigned, while football administrators and politicians have lined up to criticise his "errors". Prime minister Andy Burnham went further, declaring that Infantino was "the wrong man" to continue leading FIFA. Significantly, this condemnation has accelerated only after widespread media reporting and visible supporter hostility. Once politicians sensed which way public opinion was moving, they were eager to position themselves as defenders of football's traditions.

Supporters

Yet it is worth asking what would actually change if FFE came into existence. In many respects the financialisation of football is already deeply entrenched. Every available surface has become advertising space. Every competition is sponsored. Every broadcast interruption has become a commercial opportunity.

European football's administering body, UEFA, for example, already operates sophisticated commercial structures to market and sell rights to its competitions. Champions League broadcasting is an industrial exercise in extracting maximum value from audiences around the globe. FIFA itself justified FFE by pointing out that "many major sporting organisations have restructured their commercial operations in similar ways in recent years in pursuit of the same long-term goal - sustainable growth that can be reinvested in the

sport itself." That is the language of corporate management, not sporting administration.

Ordinary supporters have already demonstrated that they are perfectly capable of distinguishing between gradual commercial encroachment and sudden leaps in commodification. Take the much-criticised hydration breaks introduced during hot-weather tournaments. There are genuine welfare arguments for protecting players from dangerous temperatures, but supporters immediately recognised how quickly these pauses became TV advertising opportunities - complete with sponsored graphics, commercial messaging and carefully timed broadcast breaks. They were widely booed, precisely because the commodification was so visible.

The same dynamic appeared even more dramatically during the attempted creation of the European Super League. The proposals, announced in 2021, would have established a closed competition involving Europe's richest clubs, guaranteeing permanent participation for founding members regardless of domestic sporting performance. It represented perhaps the clearest expression yet of football treated as an investment portfolio rather than a competitive sporting pyramid.

The backlash was immediate, organised and remarkably effective. Supporters mobilised outside stadiums, fan organisations coordinated opposition across Europe, while trade unions, journalists and community groups joined the campaign. Politicians quickly discovered the popularity of defending football against billionaire owners. Within days, clubs began withdrawing.

The remarkable feature is that all 12 founding clubs initially backed the scheme. Only after mass opposition threatened their wider interests did they retreat. Real Madrid remained the principal holdout, pursuing legal action against UEFA, the Spanish Football Federation and La Liga, alleging "anti-competitive behaviour" and "abuse of dominant market position" after sanctions were threatened against participating clubs.

Legal questions aside, politically the lesson was unmistakable. Football supporters still possess the capacity to organise collectively, when changes appear both obvious and immediate. The problem is that capitalism does not always advance only through dramatic ruptures. Far more often, it proceeds through incremental change.

Ticket prices rise season after season, justified by the surge in the transfer prices for football stars, which itself has been driven by commercial revenues. Supporters find themselves purchasing multiple subscription packages simply to watch competitions that were once available through public broadcasters. Kick-off times become increasingly inconvenient, as fixtures are tailored to global television audiences rather than local communities. Shirt sponsorship

has expanded from the front of kits to sleeves, training wear and virtually every available backdrop. Stadium naming rights become normal. International tournaments expand beyond sporting necessity, because additional matches generate additional broadcasting revenue.

Ownership

Each individual change appears manageable, but together they fundamentally alter football's social character. This is precisely how commodification generally succeeds.

In Britain the Football Governance Act 2025 represents a limited acknowledgement that football cannot simply be left to market forces. The legislation established an 'independent football regulator' with powers over club licensing, financial sustainability, fan engagement and protections against clubs joining unapproved breakaway competitions. These measures are welcome, as far as they go: they recognise football as possessing social value beyond shareholder returns. But they remain fundamentally defensive: they regulate capitalism rather than challenge it; they do little to confront the ownership structures, commercial monopolies and broadcasting arrangements that continue to reshape the game in favour of capital accumulation. Nor can purely national legislation adequately regulate institutions such as FIFA or UEFA, whose operations are inherently international.

That is why communists should refuse to limit themselves to defending yesterday's settlement. Football's future cannot simply be entrusted to regulators overseeing increasingly sophisticated forms of commercial exploitation. The struggle must become international, just as football itself is international.

Supporters' organisations, trade unions, community clubs and socialist movements should demand democratic control over the governance of football, meaningful supporter representation at every level, restrictions upon speculative ownership and commercial extraction, and coordinated European (indeed global) protection against the relentless commodification of the sport.

In this latest instance, Infantino has struggled to recognise that death by a thousand cuts has been the safest strategy for marketising football. Small commercial concessions, introduced gradually, often pass with relatively little resistance. This latest proposal, however, looked rather different. Thanks to the reporting of *The Times* and the *Financial Times*, what was intended to appear as further technical restructuring instead resembled a dagger thrust directly towards the heart of the game.

Supporters recognised the danger almost instinctively and communists should do far more than simply recognise it: we should keep explaining how best to organise the resistance before football finally bleeds out ●