

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity

weekly worker



**Media-amplified outrage over Greens' A105
'Zionism is racism' motion has nothing to
do with anti-Semitism. It's about policing**

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Towards a mass Communist Party

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PALESTINE



LETTERS



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

DSA right wing

In response to my recent critiques of the Democratic Socialists of America's Red Star caucus - a Marxist-Leninist faction that one of the DSA's two co-chairs belongs to - some commentators have suggested my writing represents an attack by the organisation's right flank on its left.

The DSA hosts a range of opinion, that could be plausibly divided into right and left. I'm not sure these are the most useful descriptions, but I understand them. I reject the notion, however, that my specific criticism of Red Star's support of totalitarian regimes is somehow more rightwing, while their defence of nominally 'socialist' dictatorships is somehow more leftwing.

For instance, not long ago, I attended a meeting of the Hartford DSA branch, in which the DSA's stance on a potential presidential run by Congress representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was debated. The question arose of the organisation building a third party, which I was strongly against. I was very familiar with the pre-2016 left, before socialists started regularly using the Democratic ballot line, and had no desire to return to the self-marginalisation of that era. I'm open to the idea that this position puts me on the DSA right - personally I think it reflects a willingness to reckon with the reality of America's two-party system, but if people want to describe that as a more conservative view than that of those seeking a break with the Democratic Party, I can accept the framing.

That said, when it comes to my criticism of Red Star, I fundamentally disagree with the way in which commentators are categorising the discussion. There's nothing leftwing about defending dictatorship. In fact, I'd argue there's not much that's more conservative. China, and countries like it, have merely replaced private control of the means of production by an elite *capitalist* class with private control of the means of production by an elite *bureaucratic* class. On top of this, contrary to propaganda repeated by Red Star members about 'whole process people's democracy', the Chinese government is a one-party state that severely restricts freedom of the press, as well as internet access.

I worry that DSA culture of ideological tolerance - some degree of which is necessary for a big-tent organisation to succeed - has reached the point at which members who should know better aren't standing up for basic democratic principles or factual reality. As a result, a surprising number of young DSA activists seem to be absorbing totalitarian lies uncritically. This culture has created a dynamic in which those pushing back against these falsehoods are viewed as disruptive to unity. For instance, my posting ability on the organisation's internal forums was limited, because I was confronting these authoritarian tendencies too much. The last comments of mine, which inspired moderator action, included one in which I referred to Red Star members as tankies and another in which I asked what the caucus's position on North Korea was.

Apparently, the first was disrespectful and the second was believed to have been made in bad faith. I don't deny the first accusation, but in terms of the second, I actually

did want to know how far Red Star took their opposition to criticising regimes that called themselves socialist. It's a strange stance, considering the caucus seemed to oppose supporting Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris on 'lesser evil' grounds, even in the face of a fascist threat as dangerous as the MAGA movement. I guess opposition to 'lesser evil' thinking does not extend to the question of criticising North Korea, which, in my understanding, is essentially a hereditary monarchy masquerading as socialism.

Above all, I disagree with Red Star on the merits. I don't believe there is such a thing as socialism without democracy. Still, I'd be remiss not to mention Red Star's prominence is a public-relations disaster waiting to happen. A *Newsweek* article from earlier this year provided a potential sample of what's to come. Didi Kirsten Tatlow, relying on a DSA insider, reported that members of the organisation's international committee were trying to cultivate connections with the Chinese Communist Party and downplayed the country's oppressive treatment of groups like the Uyghurs. Tatlow's piece unfairly tried to tie New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani to all of this, but I have no reason to doubt her other reporting, based on my interactions with Red Star members online.

I've found DSA members who perhaps aren't Marxist-Leninists themselves, but are sympathetic to them, trying to root the ideology in the American democratic socialist tradition by pointing out Eugene Debs' praise for Soviet Russia in 1919. First of all, I think this conflates the views and actions of Vladimir Lenin with Marxist-Leninism. They are different things. The latter was formulated after Lenin's death by Joseph Stalin and was subsequently expanded by dictators like Mao Zedong. Stalin hadn't consolidated power by the time Debs died. Second, Debs' view of Lenin was, at a minimum, quickly complicated. By 1922, he was cabling Lenin, pleading with the Russian leader not to execute socialist rivals.

The example of Norman Thomas, Debs' successor in the Socialist Party of America, provides a better idea of what Debs' perspective of Marxist-Leninism might have been, had he lived to see Stalin put it into practice. Thomas described the Soviet system as "red fascism". I think that's as good a description as any, and communicates the idea that defence of dictatorship is not meaningfully leftist. It's tragic that the DSA must define itself as 'democratic socialist' - a label that should be redundant, however anti-democratic groups, including those within the organisation, like Red Star, help make the label necessary.

While I'm opposed to purging such groups from the DSA, because I fear it could create a self-destructive, sectarian spiral, I hope the membership will vote Red Star out of positions of power.

Jon Hochschartner
Connecticut

Labour camps

The imperialist enemy will be caught between the peoples of the west, who they have completely separated themselves from, and the rest of the world they polluted and looted for centuries, who will have now proudly taken control of their own destinies. The imperialists will be caught between a rock and a hard place.

Their Nazified media machine has collapsed in terms of audience size

and sheer mental retardation. All it can do is scream and shriek, but to no avail - their horrible fate is assured: the mass deportation of the western colonial gangs - approximately 50 million sub-humans - to the furthest reaches of Russia's Arctic wasteland, to be incarcerated in specially built labour camps for the rest of their miserable lives!

Nothing will ever be heard from these loud-mouths again - their generational breeding, inheritance of ill-gotten gains and perverted rule ended, to the immense cheering of the world's population. Imagine the celebrations!

Elijah Traven
Hull

Fake partijisme

Last week's Online Communist Forum, discussing the 'Re-establish Comintern' article (September 24) by comrades Edith Fischer from Australia and Elise van der Doelen from my own country, raised the point of the international 'partyist' tendency. No, as Mike Macnair and other comrades in the discussion rightly argued, we should not form yet another international, next to all the Trotskyist and Stalinist, etc internationals, but this time of partyists. Instead, we should do what is fundamental to my strategic understanding of partyism: go through the existing Marxist left (nationally and internationally) to reforge communist parties that can organise themselves into an international.

It was a pity not to have the authors, or other comrades supporting the article, participate in the OCF discussion. Comrades, here is an invitation to start building these fraternal relations you propose we build - why aren't you there? There may have been, certainly for the comrades from Australia with the time difference, logistical obstacles perhaps. These are the first to overcome when you want to build an international. But I suspect part of the problem is in fact political.

Indeed, I'd like to challenge the usefulness of the 'partyism' label and whether it is correct to speak of an international partyist tendency. In Britain, we see self-described partyists who don't want to talk to the CPGB, despite the key role Mike Macnair's book has played for the re-emergence of 'orthodox Marxism' and 'partyism' internationally. The Dutch Revolutionary Socialist Party has recently seen the emergence of two (!) new factions using 'partyism' in their points of unity. One of those, however, with their first point being that no meaningful engagement with the broader Dutch left is possible, and that focus should be only on building the RSP.

What then is 'partyism'? For some comrades, this word must mean nothing more than recognising the necessity of a mass communist party. And sure, this aim already differentiates them from various parts of the left; but it does not meaningfully differentiate them *strategically* from most of the radical left. Indeed, just like all the other small groups, they say the focus should be on agitation: ie, going 'directly to the working class'. This strategy has been tried and tested, and it does not suffice to build the party we need.

As far as I am concerned, you can use the label 'partyism' (although its direct Dutch translation - '*partijisme*' - is so hideous that it should not be put in print). But then let us discuss with all partyists the strategical questions that can bring about mass communist parties and a new international - also with those publishing this paper, to

which you have sent your article.

Filip Spijkerman
Communist Platform, Netherlands

Real politics

We have in last week's *Weekly Worker* (October 1) a letter from Stuart Leigh calling for the CPGB and especially Carla Roberts to, I guess, get their hands dirty and get stuck into some "real politics". Leigh calls for "standing for election or taking up the grim, unglamorous burden of municipal representation" which currently "is recoiled from, as if it were a direct invitation to contract advanced tertiary syphilis".

So the CPGB, especially comrade Roberts, should stand for election and if seats are won, even a minority, then we should take up "the grim, unglamorous burden of municipal representation". I assume that this means that if we join a government, national or local, we should at least go along with arms for Ukraine and Israel; reductions in health care, pensions and housing assistance ... These are just a price we have to pay, presumably, "to advance the class struggle". But no. The CPGB has, instead, "cowardice of the professional critic, terrified that contact with the messy, friction-ridden apparatus of real politics might expose a total lack of traction".

And finally, "Carla Roberts and her *Weekly Worker* comrades know how to call for the building of a mass communist party: you just don't know how to build the mass communist party. And that's really the most important part: the building. Anybody can just call for one!"

I must apologise here for the multiple repetitions from the original. I've tried to cut through the lengthy faux eloquence to see what he's getting at: we should be prepared to get our hands dirty in a genuine struggle to build a communist party, even if this means acting as a junior partner to reformists.

One problem here is that he fails to give a single example of this effort bringing success - or even just a partial failure. The Greens' support of the SPD in Germany? Militant support for Labour in Liverpool? The successes of Podemos in Spain? Nearer home, Corbynista support for Labour? Where are our lodestars?

The CPGB is obviously hankering after the Russian success of 1917, but what has happened since? I am reminded of an interview with Joseph Heller, the author of *Catch-22*. It was pointed out to him that he had written nothing as good since. He replied: "Neither has anyone else."

So we still need to build mass communist parties of the working class and apparently the CPGB is busy dreaming, not building. So come on, comrade: show us how it's done.

Jim Nelson
email

Deep critique

I'm taking a second bite at comrade Lawrence Parker's cherry, as it were, because my first reply to him last week (Letters, October 1) fell short by

dwelling on the facile personal side rather than the substance he raised (Letters, September 24).

He states: "The fundamental issue is this: can we use older forms (such as Brecht's learning plays) today without an accompanying deep critique of history and theory?" Well, rather than Parker's accusation of us uncritically plucking at 'favourite things', that is precisely how this whole project first developed. I approached Esther Leslie to explore how Brecht's learning play, *The exception and the rule*, had its world premiere in a kibbutz near Haifa on May Day 1938 and how Israeli cultural forces have recently been taking credit for this.

Of course, this demands a close study of the historical circumstances around the play and production. In particular how those in the kibbutz who considered themselves communists equated that with Zionism - a racist ideology that grew to consider itself to be the exception and the ruler.

We've gone further into this with the discovery that the International Brecht Society (IBS) held its 2022 international symposium in Tel Aviv University despite calls from IBS members and Palestinian theatre companies that this was breaking the BDS cultural boycott and excluded Palestinians.

In solidarity with such a call from IBS member and Norwegian playwright Finn Iunker, who fought the decision from within, we declared that the IBS had forsaken its claim to the mantle of Brecht's aim to create a *Diderot Gesellschaft Movement* - an international society of artists, scientists, academics and others collectivising to counter prevailing fascist ideology. This was all something we learned from Iunker and took up that cause, with the beginnings of such a society already formulating. This is putting into practice what Parker says is needed: as "the road of critique at least gives the movement a chance to come together".

The call for such a Diderot *Gesellschaft* movement has been issued at Communist University and will be extended with its own session at the Historical Materialism conference in London in November.

Tam Dean Burn
Glasgow

Defend juries

Although the government has shelved its plan to abolish most jury trials, it still intends to double the sentencing power of magistrates to two years, to introduce judge-only trials in "lengthy and technical" fraud cases and to abolish the right to elect trial by jury in 'either way' cases, thereby greatly restricting access to legal aid. It is not clear whether or not the government still intends to abolish the automatic right of appeal from the magistrates' court to the crown court.

Every one of those measures must be resisted without compromise.

David Lindsay
Lanchester

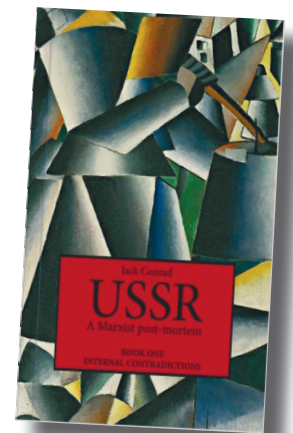
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GREENS

Straight from the playbook

Media-amplified outrage over the A105 ‘Zionism is racism’ motion has nothing to do with anti-Semitism, argues **Carla Roberts**. It is about imposing imperialist interests on a potential junior coalition partner

No wonder that Zack Polanski tried to postpone the conference¹ - officially so that activists could “concentrate” on the October 8 by-election in Holborn and St Pancras, where he is the Green Party’s candidate. However, the executive voted the proposal down - maybe they now regret the decision. Rather than showcasing the Greens as an acceptable coalition partner, their October 2-4 conference in Brighton has been entirely overshadowed by the very predictable row over the A105 ‘Zionism is racism’ motion.

At their spring conference, the Green Party’s ‘realo’ right and various Zionists had managed to filibuster proceedings with endless points of order, so the motion was not even voted on.² Perhaps that was the best possible outcome for Polanski, who missed the entire event. He spent the day dancing at the ‘Together against the right’ demonstration in London.

No such luck this time. He gave a decent enough opening speech, claiming that the government’s decision to deploy sanctions against illegal Israeli settlements was down to pressure from the Greens. A vastly exaggerated claim, but with a grain of truth. At the moment the Palestine solidarity movement has no other *serious* electoral outlet: “Vote Green, and watch Labour move.” But his decision to then head back to London was a big political mistake.

As an aside: so overarching has the media furore been over the Zionism motion that the fact that the Greens voted, quite incredibly, to drop their opposition to nuclear power, has gone almost entirely unnoticed. It is now described as a form of “low-carbon electricity generation”. The commitment to “phase out” the “nuclear industry” has been replaced with “fossil fuels”.³ Madness: nuclear power is not just vastly expensive and potentially disastrous, it is inextricably linked to the production of weapons of mass destruction.⁴

Carbon copy

There is now a clear split in the Green Party - in what looks like almost a carbon copy of the same issues playing out in the Labour Party from 2016 onwards. It is worth remembering that Polanski was on the wrong side in that civil war. As “a pro-European Jew”, he said, there were “two reasons I couldn’t vote for Labour under Jeremy Corbyn”, which is “rife with anti-Semitism”.⁵ He was still with the Liberal Democrats then and later apologised.

He certainly has learned a lesson from Corbyn’s (self-)defeat and was initially much better at standing up to the same sort of charges. It is to be welcomed that he recently came out as an “anti-Zionist”. But going AWOL in this crucial debate was a pathetic attempt to ‘stay neutral’. It could only ever backfire - and it did.

Mothin Ali, the party’s deputy leader, was the only Green ‘VIP’ to support the ‘Zionism is racism’ motion. Four of the party’s MPs had publicly opposed it ahead of the vote, as did former leader Caroline Lucas and co-deputy leader Rachel Millward. Hannah Spencer tried to ‘do a Polanski’ and kept schtum (though we hear she ‘privately’ mobilised against the motion).

As soon as the motion was adopted (by 1,022 to 813 votes), the usual suspects were first out of the gate: the Board of Deputies, the Jewish



Zack Polanski: still equivocating

Leadership Council, the Campaign against Antisemitism and the Jewish Labour Movement all released pre-prepared statements. Various ‘legal threats’ were darkly mooted too. The Israeli government announced that Polanski is barred from entry. Donald Trump’s special ‘envoy for anti-Semitism’, rabbi Yehuda Kaploun, said that the US government will be making “representations” to the UK, whatever that means. Of course, those types could not care less about the presence (or not) of anti-Semitism in the Greens. They simply use every opportunity to delegitimise the Palestine solidarity movement and give cover to Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza.

They were followed by 18 Labour MPs who reported the Greens to Sussex police and the so-called Equality and Human Rights Commission. Among the 18 are outstanding citizens, such as Zionist Luke Akehurst and Mark Sowards, the chair of Labour Friends of Israel.⁶ Not to be outdone, the ever so leftwing Angela Rayner wrote on X: “Today’s vote at the Green Party conference crosses a line and is rightly being condemned across the political spectrum.”⁷

Various Labour grandees have followed suit, trying to prove that they have moved on from Corbynism and are now *very* responsible in managing capitalism. Our sanctions are merely symbolic, you see, and do not mean that we will stop supporting Israel. While Andy Burnham has said nothing, unnamed ‘sources’ have let it be known that the Greens in their current state are not considered potential coalition partners (another indicator that a snap election is unlikely).

Then there are various ‘useful idiots’ like Peter Tatchell (who believes there is a ‘good’ variety of Zionism); Novara’s Aaron Bastani (“Is Zionism racism? ... it is a legitimate debate”)⁸; the European Greens (“we unequivocally distance ourselves”)⁹ and various rightwing Greens who have publicly quit, including Sandy Ruthven, the chair of Amnesty International UK’s charitable trust. The Socialist Party in England and Wales too has denounced the motion¹⁰, as have some of the more straightforward pro-imperialist outfits

like the Alliance for Workers Liberty.¹¹

We have made no secret of our criticisms of the Green Party - it is not a working-class party, it does not fight for socialism. On the contrary, it wants to tweak capitalism in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie. But clearly the current attacks against the Greens are a direct attack on the Palestine solidarity movement. Any socialist who cannot oppose those attacks should hang their head in shame.

Say what you will about the Greens or motion A105 (and we do have some disagreements, see below) - but at least the decisions taken at their conference are binding. That is certainly better than the charade that is the Labour Party conference - or the farce that was the founding conference of Jeremy Corbyn’s Your Party.

But when it comes to annual conference, the delegate system used by the Labour Party is way more democratic than the so-called ‘direct democracy’ of the Greens. All members were able to attend the three-day conference, either in person (£80; £50 for those on ‘lower income’) or online (£40; £25). Members could have even attended online just for one day, for a tenner - and yet, less than 2,000 people bothered voting on this important issue - not even one per cent of the entire membership of 230,000.¹² This illustrates how entirely unengaged Green Party members are.

In an article lampooning this ‘direct democracy’ and looking at alternative options, *The Guardian* quotes ‘insiders’, who think that it might be problematic “to give MPs greater authority over members, because it would undermine the party’s commitment to grassroots democracy”. Another ‘Green insider’ suggests that “members [ie, conference] could determine broad strategic priorities, with smaller bodies developing detailed policy.”¹³ The most obvious and only democratic alternative - a structure with elected, accountable delegates - does not even occur.

One or two?

Motion A105 basically reflects the bog-standard view of the left: it supports the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign, demands the de-proscription of Palestine Action

and freedom for Palestinian political prisoners. All supportable. We also agree that “anti-Zionism should not be equated with anti-Semitism” and there is no question that “Zionism is racism”: the Israeli government has been racially discriminating against the non-Hebrew population. Fact. Even the UN says it.

Zionism is *inverted* anti-Semitism: it too considers Jews a race - a race of outsiders, who will always face persecution from gentiles, which is why they have to ‘return’ to Israel. It explains the disdain for assimilation and the dogma of eternal anti-Semitism. It is innate in all non-Jews - or so the Zionist myth goes.

It is also utter nonsense to claim that the “right to resistance” equates to “terrorism”. Particularly as the motion - wrongly - specifies that “the struggle to achieve that liberation by all available means *under international law* is legitimate”. What if the Palestinians - who are victims of genocide, no less - take actions that are *not* permitted under international law? For example, often there are not clear lines between the military and civilians in Israel. There are a number of such legalistic references. No doubt they have been included in the name of appearing ‘respectable’ and to ward off attacks. The current backlash proves how misguided and futile such attempts are.

We understand that 15 amendments were submitted, four of those tabled and only one amendment, number 4, went through - a purely administrative clarification to make sure that the party’s rulebooks and existing policy documents are updated.

Amendment 3 sought to “protect” Jewish party members who attend venues that identify as Zionist (such as synagogues or community centres) from being disciplined internally under the Green Party’s racism policy. This was rejected by 1,086 votes to 684 - and quite rightly. It was seen as an attempt to sabotage the motion. Nonetheless, Polanski supported it - and issued a statement declaring that “as leader I will not accept any exclusion, or refusal to engage with anyone, because of the religious or communal body they are part of”.

We are not in the Green Party, but, when faced with members who

identify as Zionists, the first task is to engage, challenge and educate. Exclusion should only be the last resort. In the process, all can learn. But the idea of happily co-existing with Zionist members is surely a giveaway. It is code for a Green junior minister (or two) going along with and accepting established British foreign policy in the name of political ‘realism’.

Amendments

Polanski and various Green grandees also supported (failed) amendments 1 and 2, which sought to remove the motion’s commitment to “a single democratic Palestinian state”, as this is in opposition to the previous Green Party support for the so-called two-state solution.

In our view, both options are no solutions at all. The ‘two-state solution’ is dead, kept alive to preserve the *pretence* of upholding democratic and humanitarian values. The ‘one-state solution’ is *sincere* but equally illusory: how can the Israeli population be persuaded or forced into a single Palestinian *capitalist* state? At present Israeli (Hebrew) people, including workers, enjoy massive political and economic advantages over Palestinians. Will they voluntarily surrender their national privileges to join a single state where they will have to directly compete, not least on the labour market, with the Palestinian underclass?

And who is to make them do it? Today in Gaza and on the West Bank the Palestinian population stands on the brink of another nakba. Hamas is in no position to beat the IDF in Gaza, or the West Bank, let alone within pre-1967 Israel. As for Fatah, it is an Israeli collaborator, an asset when it comes to maintaining the Israeli occupation.

The British government might well recognise the Palestinian state in the name of the ‘two-state solution’. But there is no Palestinian state, only a pulverised, traumatised, half-occupied Gaza and a patchwork of increasingly fragmented Arab reservations on the West Bank, ruled over in the one case by an Islamic militia and by a thoroughly corrupt and compromised elite on the other.

No, the only viable solution is regional ... led by a working class that fights for a socialist federation, internationalism and universal human liberation. Only such a movement could conceivably be strong enough to win over the Israeli working class by assuring it that they too have little to lose, everything to win ●

Notes

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LABOUR

Burnham on the front foot

With talk of a National Care Service, public ownership and electoral reform, Andy Burnham made the most of his first conference speech as prime minister. But he is not master of his own fate, suggests **Paul Demarty**

Given his robotic, gunshy public presentation in most situations, it is easy to forget that Sir Keir Starmer was capable of winning over the home crowd. He never had a Labour conference speech as disastrous, certainly, as Theresa May's infamous evening to forget at the Tory conference of 2017, when she was overcome with coughing fits and presented with a P45 by a protester, while the stage setting slowly fell apart around her.

Still, the contrast in Liverpool on September 29, when the 'king of the north', Andy Burnham, delivered his first conference speech as prime minister, was quite striking. Both men have a habit of going on about their dads, but Burnham was happy to cry real (or realistic) tears over the father he recently lost - a notable change from the terminally focus-grouped waffling of Starmer. Burnham, moreover, had a theory of Britain's parlous state beyond the incompetence of his predecessors. He was able to do a decent impression of hopefulness, while also starkly accusing the political class for its failures, including, at least once, specifically accusing himself.

He was also willing to make a show of taking risks. Thus the flagship policies: reducing the pension triple lock to a mere double lock, removing the tie-in to real wages, in order - he implied - to fund a new 'National Care Service', free at the point of use; greater use of the state in building council houses and controlling water services, up to and including public ownership; tacking back to closer relations with the EU, with rejoining pointedly not ruled out; and unspecified electoral reform in the direction of greater proportionality.

Each of these looks, at the present time of asking, like a good bet; but they are all *bets*. The triple lock has been in the sights of successive governments, but the electoral arithmetic of this ageing country has always defeated them. Posing it as a *quid pro quo* with free social care is one way to, as he put it, "rip the plaster off". The politics of Brexit are thorny, to say the least, but there is enough buyer's remorse out there that he can probably get away with it. That and the promise of some kind of proportional representation is a good sell to the Liberal Democrat and Green voters, worrying away at Labour's share of the poll - although actually delivering PR would make that a one-time-only deal.

We are impressed so far, then, with his caniness. This whole combination - from the weeping to the constitutional tweaks - allows him to appear sincere, while also keeping a keen eye on the electoral bottom line, to offer a hopeful vision, while also signalling willingness to take 'tough decisions', and so on. In reply, Tory leader Kemi Badenoch had recourse only to fatuous "going back to the 1970s" clichés (as opposed to the roaring successes of the early 2020s?), and Nigel Farage huffed about the triple lock for his grey-skewing audience. The popularity of different elements of Burnham's programme will no doubt fluctuate, as he receives the tender affections of the rightwing press, but it seems safe to say that he won the day.

Of course, it is necessary to have a look at the fine print here. We cannot go through every dot and comma of his programme, so we will make do with the housing and water proposals.

The first thing to say is that both of these are very much tied up with a 10-year time horizon. This is not



Getting approval from the boss

unreasonable in itself. If a powerful wizard made Britain into a functioning socialist society tomorrow, and protected it from external sabotage, there would still be enormous work to do to restore the country's social housing stock and repair the damage done to the water supply by decades of deterioration under the rule of finance capital. Nonetheless, it allowed him to bellow soaring promises to the eager crowd in Liverpool without even committing to putting them in the next manifesto. This is, let us say, a bit cheeky.

Build, build, build

On to the substance: Burnham promises the largest council house building programme since the "post-war era" - he deliberately stressed *council* house. He will exclude new council homes from right to buy (not backdated to existing ones). He announced a barrage of measures to rein in private landlords (no doubt to the annoyance of several of his own MPs). He will clamp down on exploitative leasehold charges, and make it easier to buy starter homes by reducing the deposit requirements.

It would be churlish to say that, from a socialist point of view, there is *nothing* to like here. Certainly the emphasis on council houses is good, as is the end to the beggar-thy-neighbour nightmare of right to buy (not including the existing estate is a grumble, but the numbers still leaking out are frankly trivial). On the other side of the ledger, the Tories already created 5% mortgages, 'help to buy' and the rest. How small is the required deposit envisaged by Burnham? Fifty quid and an eighth of weed? On top of all that, any Tory will immediately leap up and demand, 'How do you intend to pay for all this?' That is a good question, regardless of the political valence, but we defer it for now.

There is a more fundamental problem with this hodgepodge (also connected to the pensions and care issues). For many - probably most - private owners, the biggest upside over renting is that a house is an investment. But for that to work, a house must accrue value; for a house to accrue value means it must become more expensive, and for real estate to be a viable method of capital accumulation the housing market as a whole must rise in value above inflation.

The use of private home ownership

as a personal investment is a deliberate political choice, designed to give elements of the lower middle and upper working classes buy-in to the success of the British economy in a narrow, line-go-up sense. Burnham likes to insist that everything went south in the 1980s; well, this is one of those things that went south. Seriously increasing the housing supply, whether through council house building or some kind of inducement to private developers, will hit house prices and throw a lot of ordinary people who drank the post-Thatcher property-porn Kool-Aid into negative equity. This is the kind of thing you *can* build a backlash on.

On water, there is a plan to abolish Margaret Thatcher's rule against public ownership, and to give mayors (he always uses that word, and not 'councils') unspecified powers to hold water companies "to account". This is even weaker tea, but, we suspect, similar problems: really attacking private ownership of the water companies would mean attacking finance capital and, by extension, the institutional investors, like pension funds, who ultimately own these things in many cases. Thatcher and her heirs *succeeded* in financialising the British economy, and that is one difficult plaster to rip off.

Dependency

The problem is further illustrated by stepping outside the conference hall for a moment. The day after his big speech, he was asked about the unfolding Manchester City football finance scandal, which could theoretically see the independent football regulator created by Starmer force a sale of the club on its Abu Dhabi royal owners.

This salt-of-the-earth populist was suddenly quite defensive: "I would be really concerned to lose [the Emiratis]," he said. "They've been such a huge partner in the building of modern Manchester and the building of Manchester City into the global force that it is." He went on to "thank the City Football Group and the wider ownership for the money that they didn't just put into the Etihad [Stadium] and the campus around it, but also into the city."

In the football world, this was not received well. The City scandal is arguably the worst in the whole chequered history of the sport, and also a perfect image of what happens

when - as Burnham often said in his speech - you "give up control" of something very important. Yet he is surely speaking the plain truth. Emirati money was, indeed, a key input to Burnham's success as Manchester mayor, as no doubt was other foreign investment besides. That was the engine of the city's transformation, for better or worse. Of course, it is now no longer a local problem: seriously alienating the United Arab Emirates would be a diplomatic headache, though probably survivable. Stripping them of ownership would be a serious blow to Britain's reputation as a safe haven for such showy investments, and it is not clear what else we have to offer at this point in our long decline.

Such is the complexity of the 'how do you pay for it?' problem. Britain imports 40% of its food, never mind other goods. It is not built for autarky: it depends on playing its determinate role in a world system still dominated by the United States, with rich but smaller states like the Emirates within that alliance structure. It is a harder game to play now even than it was - what with an increasingly erratic and autocratic Donald Trump announcing and cancelling sanctions every half hour. There are few countries as vulnerable to capital flight in the advanced world as ours, and so we must keep our sponsors happy.

One indispensable item on the American list of demands - made more rudely by Trump than his immediate predecessors, but a plain concern at least back to the Obama administration - is increased military spending. The Americans expect their Nato allies to look more after their own defence - financially, at least; they expect all that money to be spent on American weapons. Within these constraints, Burnham faces classic 'guns or butter' dilemmas - made all the worse, since any Keynesian stimulus effect is likely to be appropriated by the Americans.

On top of that, the world financial system presents its own worries at the moment. Much of the at best tepid growth on display in recent years has overwhelmingly come from the AI subsector of big tech, but the idea is becoming more widespread in the investor class that this is a bubble. The build-out of AI-specialised data centres - a key part of Starmer's 'growth, growth, growth' schtick, and also part of Burnham's programme - is funded by increasingly elaborate and dubious debt structures and, under the inflationary pressure of Trump's Iranian adventure, debt is getting more expensive, from treasuries to corporate bonds. Crisis may or may not be imminent, but the unwinding of all this stuff has the potential to be very destructive.

Homespun wisdom

What can Burnham do about that? What piece of homespun wisdom from his gran will he bring to bear on the problem of a new global financial crisis? Of course, action *will* be taken, as it was by Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling back in 2008. But it is not likely to be action of the 'giving out sweets' variety. It will be painful for people; and, while it really cannot be helped if you are prime minister of the British capitalist state under such circumstances, voters tend to remember if sweets are promised but not delivered. They do not ordinarily know the meaning of the phrase '*force majeure*'.

I say this by way of making the broader point: Burnham's success or failure is, to a very large extent, out of his hands. He has freedom of action on the conference stage. He does not have much freedom of action in the way of - Starmer again - 'delivery, delivery, delivery'.

Good luck, Andy: you'll need it ●

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Online Communist Forum



Sunday October 11 5pm

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CHRISTA PIKE

Cruel and unusual treatment

Her botched execution is a gruesome reminder of the utterly barbaric nature of the death penalty, says **Eddie Ford**. But what about dealing with counterrevolutionaries during a bitterly fought civil war?

Christa Pike, the US death row inmate, was “conscious and speaking” on the night of October 6 after surviving two supposedly lethal injections in Tennessee’s Riverbend Maximum Security Institution. Her apparent recovery is described as “medically unprecedented” and, while her prognosis remains unclear, her defence team say that “at a minimum, we expect a long recovery.” They expressed their gratitude that the first responders and the medical team at the hospital “treated Christa like a human”.

By contrast, in a display of utter barbarity, Pike remained handcuffed and shackled to her hospital bed, while doctors tried to clear her body of the injected chemicals. Becoming the only person known to have survived a complete execution attempt in the US, there has been widespread revulsion over her botched execution. Frankly, it amounted to nothing more than state torture. On top of all that, she underwent nearly 30 years of solitary confinement on death row.

But we now have the appalling possibility, of course, that the authorities might try to kill and torture her again if she recovers sufficiently from the first attempt - whether by injecting pentobarbital once more, or using some other grisly method.

Commute sentence

Moreover, surely Christa Pike’s sentence should be commuted with a view to her eventual release from prison. Her lawyers have filed for clemency on the basis that her execution would be unjust, given she was just 18 at the time of the crime and her own horrific experiences as a teenager. Bill Lee, governor of Tennessee, has paused all executions in the state for the remainder of the year.

Pike, now aged 50, would have been the first woman executed in that state since 1820. She and her boyfriend lured a 19-year-old classmate into woods, where they tortured and killed her. A media frenzy broke out and she was portrayed as evil incarnate. In fact, she herself was a victim who had



Victim of child rape

suffered extreme and violent abuse since she was a child, including being raped by several strangers, as well as beatings by her relatives. Pike was subsequently diagnosed with bipolar and post-traumatic stress disorders.

In what was expected to be her final statement, Pike said she loved both her supporters and those who hated her alike. During the execution attempt, according to her lawyers, prison officials tried to start intravenous lines by using at least *seven needles* on Pike’s arm. “One needle was bent in a 90-degree angle when it was removed,” a defence filing states. While receiving the two doses, “she could be heard crying, whimpering and breathing loudly throughout the procedure”, her lawyers said.

Under Tennessee’s lethal injection protocol, if the person remains alive five minutes after receiving a first dose of the pentobarbital injection, a second injection is to be administered - but the execution protocol does not say what should happen if the person remains alive after that. This was actually the second failed execution this year in Tennessee involving the same doctor in both cases. When the execution of Tony Carruthers failed, he was then granted a one-year reprieve - after which they will attempt to kill him again.

James Crowson, part of Pike’s

defence team, says he was not surprised that Tennessee botched its execution attempt, because attorneys had warned that the procedure was dangerous and potentially cruel - a number of defence filings stated quite clearly that she had “compromised” veins.¹ Crowson also said accounts that officials had followed the written protocol, but the execution was badly mishandled, are not necessarily contradictory, for the simple reason that states that impose the death penalty “don’t really include medicine or science in the discussions, when they’re coming up with these protocols”.

As a result of this gruesome incident, Tennessee’s top prison official, Frank Strada - the commissioner of the Tennessee department of correction - is stepping down later this month, as this was the fifth failed execution attempt carried out under his watch. The state has launched an independent investigation into what went wrong, as the authorities have not yet offered any explanations, but there is a strong possibility that, apart from being incorrectly administered, the pentobarbital was degraded due to factors including poor manufacturing or improper storage - factors about which experts had previously expressed concern.

Grotesque

What happened to Christa Pike is a blatant violation of the constitutional prohibition on “cruel and unusual” punishment. Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, said that it was time to turn around the “threshold question”, so that, instead of asking whether a prisoner deserved to die for the crime committed, the question should be, “Do our governments which tolerate inequality, unreliability and bias deserve to kill?”²

In a grotesque spectacle, death penalty states are scrambling to find alternatives to the lethal injection, which was supposed to be the ‘humane’ alternative to a firing squad or electric chair - at the time they were portrayed as an ‘improvement’ on hanging in a system disproportionately handing the death penalty to black men.

But inevitably, these alternatives turn out to be no better, if not worse. Alabama briefly tried using an ‘experimental’ procedure using nitrogen gas - one that vets refuse to use as a method for the euthanasia of cats and dogs - but it was blocked in June by a federal judge, ruling that it was an example of “cruel and unusual punishment”. Other states have opted for the firing squad, but recent executions this way have been dogged by bullets missing the heart, to the extent that the suggestion has been raised that some of the mis-targeted

shots may have been *intentional* - which would not be surprising.

The last time that the US saw a moratorium on executions was in 1972, when the supreme court ruled in the landmark criminal case, *Furman v Georgia*, that capital punishment was “capricious and arbitrary” and hence violated the eighth and 14th amendments prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment.³ When Pike was sentenced to death in 1996 at the age of 20, that made her one of the youngest women to receive a death sentence in the US during the post-Furman period. Although the justices did not rule that the death penalty *per se* was unconstitutional, the Furman decision invalidated the death sentences of nearly 700 people. But the ban was lifted four years later.

Paradoxically, calls for a renewed nationwide pause are reaching fever pitch at precisely the time that pressure to carry out executions is also peaking - which was only to be expected, given Donald Trump’s enthusiasm for the death penalty, repeatedly exhorting various states, as well as the federal department of justice, to speed up judicial killings. Last year saw the highest number of US executions (47 across 12 states) in 16 years, via in particular a resurgence of firing squads, despite medical experts condemning them as “excruciating”. But Trump probably regards that as a *bonus*.

Cheerleaders

What do Britain’s death-penalty cheerleaders have to say about Christa Pike?⁴ This is the pertinent question raised by Maya Foa, head of the human rights charity Reprieve.⁵ Restore Britain has promised to hold a binding referendum on the death penalty, Rupert Lowe arguing in PMQs last year that it was needed for cases where “the evil” is “so irredeemable”, and far more importantly, was “far too often perpetrated by someone who should not be in our country to begin with”.⁶ Lee Anderson, the totally obnoxious Reform MP and former Labour councillor, is also in favour of a referendum, convinced that the public would vote in favour of the death penalty. Historically, of course, there has always been a baying ‘pro-hanging’ mob amongst the Tory rank and file.

Britain abolished the death penalty for murder in 1965 after the outcry that followed a fatal miscarriage of justice, when Timothy Evans was hanged for murdering his wife and daughter - but they were actually both victims of the serial killer, John Christie, who lived downstairs. Ruth Ellis, the last woman executed in the Britain in 1955, was punched, pushed down the stairs and threatened with murder by the man she shot dead outside a now famous London pub - similar to the hideous treatment meted out to the teenage Christa Pike. And there is clear evidence, whatever the right might say, that capital punishment does not deter crime: in 2024, of the eight most violent states in the US measured by the murder rate, seven had the death penalty.

But, regardless, in April the US department of justice published a Trumpian death penalty report that brazenly claimed that *all* methods of execution available to US states are ‘humane’ - a truly sick and perverse finding despite the mountain of evidence to the contrary going back decades. Proponents of capital punishment, like Rupert Lowe, often claim that it will be reserved for the “worst of the worst” mass murderers, but consistent research shows that in

reality the death penalty is actually disproportionately reserved for the most vulnerable - including people with mental illness and intellectual disability, or people who cannot afford good lawyers. In fact, people like Timothy Evans and Christa Pike.

Tony Blair infamously promised to be “tough on crime and the causes of crime”, but we always knew what he meant by that - dishing out more punishment and punitive treatment. But we have always stressed that crime can only be understood in relation to the given society. As we live in a class society, anti-social crime is mainly a product of alienation, want or resistance - and the ‘justice system’, reflecting the balance of class forces, essentially aims to beat the population into submission. For us, however, the aim must always be rehabilitation - not punishment or revenge, let alone cruelty. In a society of freely associated producers, prisons would be just a memory, something found in history books.

Our history

As we state in the CPGB *Draft programme* (3.17. ‘Crime and prison’), under capitalism “property is considered primary; the person merely a form of property”.⁷ We know that far too many people are unnecessarily in prison, especially given that a high proportion of prisoners lack basic literacy skills, have mental health issues or suffer from an alcohol or drug problem. Therefore we say that prisoners “must be allowed the maximum opportunity to develop themselves as human beings” and thus “should only be imprisoned within a short distance of their home locality” (if not, families must be given the full cost of travel for visits). Centrally, prison life “must be made as near normal as possible”, like having the right to vote in elections, etc.

Of course, here we simply follow in the footsteps of the socialist movement. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels certainly took it for granted that the death penalty was archaic and had to go. The Socialist International ran aggressive campaigns against the death penalty. In that spirit the programme of the Russian Social Democratic Party demanded the “abolition of the death penalty”. However, and this is important, that was not an absolute position. The party opposed *tsarist* executions, but refused to tie the hands of the future in dealing with tsarist counterrevolutionaries.

Nonetheless, one of the first acts of the Bolshevik government on November 8 was the abolition decree. However, it was restored as an “exceptional measure” during the civil war, but there was always the promise that this would be temporary. Indeed the death penalty was abolished in January 1920 ... only to be restored in May 1920 with the outbreak of war with Poland.

By the late 1920s expediency had become the norm ... and we all know what happened after that. There is a lesson here ●

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Notes

1. theguardian.com/us-news/2026/oct/05/christa-pike-lawyers-difficult-cruel-execution.
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Fighting fund

We can do it

After last month’s failure to reach that much-needed £2,750 *Weekly Worker* fighting fund target, can we make up for lost ground in October?

Let’s hope so! The good news is, a rather handy number of comrades have chipped in over the first seven days of the month - 27 readers have raised a total of £599 between them. Best of the lot was comrade AC, who contributed a brilliant £100 - followed by LC and BO (£50 each), FK (£41), WC (£36), MM (£31), CG and RG (£30), II (£25), PR (£24), DL and MT (£20), CP (£16), AN (£15), MR (£13), RP and RD (£12), MM (£11), DI and SM (£10 each), KA (£8) and BG (£5).

All of the above contributed via bank transfer or standing order, while MH (£10), TM, JN and NL (£5) used PayPal. Finally that well known regular donor, comrade Hassan, handed his usual £5 note to one of the *Weekly Worker* team.

Not a bad start to the month -

but we really need those donations to keep coming our way over the next three and a half weeks. Let’s make sure we not only reach that £2,750, but go shooting past it! Let’s aim for £3,000 to put us back on track. We absolutely rely on your support to make sure the *Weekly Worker* can keep playing its central role in the campaign for a genuinely democratic, mass Marxist party, able to bring together the most principled comrades from all the rival confessional sects.

So please make a transfer, click on that PayPal button on our website, send us a cheque or hand over some cash if you happen to know a CPGB comrade. We can do it! ●

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POLEMIC

Two out of three

Should we strive to re-establish Comintern? If not, what sort of international organisation do we need and what can we achieve in the altogether famished here and now? Mike Macnair outlines our broad approach. This is an edited version of his Online Communist Forum talk

I respond here to an article by Edith Fischer of Australian Communist Unity and Elise van der Doelen of the Netherlands Revolutionair Socialistische Partij that has been published - if not quite simultaneously, then very nearly so - in four places.

In this paper it appeared as 'Re-establish Comintern'.¹ On the US website, *Cosmonaut*, it ran as a letter - 'Back to Comintern: the struggle for international communist regroupment'.² In Australian Communist Unity's *Partisan* it carried the same title.³ And in *Prometheus*, here in Britain, it appeared as 'The struggle for international communist regroupment', dropping the reference to Comintern altogether.⁴ I am not going to apologise for our editor's choice to make 'Re-establish Comintern' the title - a newspaper headline has to be snappy. Nor do I think the *Prometheus* comrades need to apologise for their decision to cut Comintern out of theirs.

The article sets as its strategic goal the refoundation of the Communist International, which it says was illegally (better, arbitrarily) abolished by the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1943. I want to be a little cautious about the word, 'illegally'. Consider, by comparison, the decision of the Taaffeites to exclude the majority of the international executive committee and the sections of their organisation, the Committee for a Workers' International. They justified it on the grounds that most CWI members were in Britain and backed Taaffe. I do not know whether that was true - I suspect it was not. If it had been, the logical course would have been to hold a congress and let the split come afterwards, once Taaffe's opponents on the IEC had been shown to be a minority.

Now apply the same logic to Comintern in 1943. Since the CPSU held state power, it is almost certain that the majority in Comintern were CPSU members. There is an English company law principle, from the case *Re Duomatic*, which says that if you had the majority needed to do something formally, it does not matter that you did it informally. In that sense, Comintern was a creature of the Russian Communist Party, later the CPSU, almost from the outset - and certainly by the time of its 1935 seventh congress. For the CPSU to dissolve it was therefore not 'illegal'. It was politically objectionable.

Towards the goal of re-establishing Comintern, the article sets three immediate tasks:

- Building systematic fraternal relations among the advocates of principled international communist regroupment - what people have called the 'partyist' trend.⁵ That means reprinting one another's articles, translating material where needed, circulating it, and keeping in correspondence.

- Establishing a correspondence committee to organise those fraternal relations in practice.

- Launching an international campaign for a new international, uniting Marxists in an international faction - in the article's words, "a fighting formation within and among the existing international formations".

I should say that I am not speaking



Delegates to first congress in 1919

formally on behalf of the CPGB's Provisional Central Committee. We have discussed this, and the comrades on the PCC are broadly in agreement, but what follows is my view rather than a PCC position.

On the first proposal - systematic, organised fraternal relations within this trend - I and the PCC are absolutely and unambiguously for it. On the second, the correspondence committee, we are also for it, provided we can make it work. There are serious practical difficulties: the Australian comrades are 10 or 11 hours ahead of UK time, and the American comrades between five and eight hours behind. It is not easy to organise, but we should do it.

The third proposal - an international faction, or a campaign for an international, as "a fighting formation within and between the existing international formations" - is, I think, seriously problematic.

I also think that the strategic line of campaigning to re-establish Comintern is the wrong way to pose the question of international organisation. I will return to my reasons after addressing some of the more general issues the comrades raise.

Common ground

I start with what I think is common ground: the workers' movement objectively needs an international. This is fundamental to Marxism. It goes back to the *Communist manifesto* of 1848, drafted by Marx and Engels for an organisation made up mainly of migrant workers in London from all over Europe - hence its statement that communists of various nationalities have come together to write it. The next step was the founding of the First International in 1864.

The step beyond that is Marx's *Critique of the Gotha programme* (1875). Point five of the draft programme said that the working class strives for its emancipation "first of all within the framework of the present-day national state, conscious that the result of its efforts, common to the workers of all civilised countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples". Marx replied that "Lassalle, against the *Manifesto* and all earlier socialism, had conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint - and was being followed in this even after the work of the [First] International." He went on:

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working

class must organise itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. In so far as its class struggle is national, not in content, but, as the *Communist manifesto* says, "in form". But the "framework of the present-day national state" - for instance, the German empire - is itself, in its turn, economically "within the framework" of the world market, politically "within the framework" of the system of states. Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing a kind of international policy.⁶

The fundamental point is this: there is no socialism in one country, because there is no capitalism in one country. Capitalism is an international social formation. It grew up on the basis of the international shipping industry, which was the core of the capitalist circuit M-C-P-C'-M' - money, commodity acquisition, productive labour under a dictatorial factory-management regime, returning the resulting worked-up commodity to money. The ships and the docks were the first factories involving the real subsumption of labour to capital. Shipping reorganised production around itself, in both the Mediterranean and the North Sea, and capitalism developed from the start as an international formation.

The consequence is that capitalist political power necessarily aspires to global reach. The Dutch Revolution immediately drew the Netherlands into worldwide wars with Spain, reaching as far as Taiwan, Malacca, Brazil and Indonesia. The English Revolution's seizure of power immediately entailed the bourgeoisie's conquest of Scotland and Ireland, followed rapidly by large-scale naval operations and the colonisation of Jamaica. The years 1689-1713 were, again, a global war. Capitalism is an international order.

It follows that attempting to take power in a single country is hopeless. Socialists have believed in it episodically: Georg von Vollmar argued in 1878 for the "isolated socialist state", and Karl Kautsky, in his 1891 *The class struggle*, argued that the introduction of socialism - meaning the dictatorship of the proletariat, the first stage of the overthrow of capitalism - would reduce international trade and lead to nationally structured production. The idea has resurfaced again and again,

but it is a dead end.

Because capitalism is an international economic and political order - a world market and *system* of states, to use Marx's terminology - the question of revolution is posed in the context of international revolutionary waves. That said, the comrades make what I think is a mistaken claim: that an international revolutionary wave is possible only when combined with pre-existing revolutionary organisation, and that it was the pre-existing international organisation in Europe that made the post-1917 wave possible.

This is wrong. 1848 was an international revolutionary wave. The Paris Commune of 1871 was the high point of another, visible also in the American Civil War and in the first Spanish republic of 1873-74. And we have seen revolutionary waves without any powerful, effective internationalism, after Comintern was dissolved: one from 1944 to 1949, and another running roughly from 1967 to 1979 or 1980 - at a time when the 'official communist' movement was actively promoting socialism in one country and national roads to socialism.

So we do not need organisation in order to have international revolutionary waves. There will be such waves, because capitalism is an international formation. Many other consequences follow from that fact; the so-called 'law of uneven development' is really a misdescription of the way capitalism, as an international order, normally involves an imperial state exercising control over a subordinated country and adapting the latter's economy to the interests of the imperial economy.

What political party organisation is needed for, is reaching for power. In a revolutionary wave the workers throw up improvised organisations of struggle - Maciej Zurewski has a useful letter in the October 1 *Weekly Worker* about the workers' councils in the Austrian revolutionary crisis. But without a party that seeks to overthrow the existing political order and create a new one, the wave grows, breaks, wears itself out and collapses in demoralisation.

Global dual power

My second, more general point is about understanding where we have been and what that means for where we are. From 1944 to 1991 world politics was characterised by a sort of duality of class power. On one side stood the Soviet regime. It was not the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the sense that the proletariat was not in charge. But it stood in an inextricable social relationship to the proletariat as a class: it held itself out as the proletarian, socialist state, and it drew a significant part of its cadre from the urban working class - even though the rank and file of its army were mainly peasants.

In the conditions of the global popular front between the USSR and the 'democratic' imperialists between 1941 and 1944, the war massively increased Soviet power and allowed the USSR to extend itself geographically: into eastern Europe, into Korea, and into Afghanistan. Afghanistan, though a feudal monarchy, was a subordinate Soviet ally, and between 1945 and the Saur Revolution of 1978, its

army officers were trained in Soviet military institutions.

This general extension of Soviet power between 1945 and 1949 carried with it the victories of the Chinese, Yugoslav and Albanian revolutions - not through Soviet armed forces directly, as in North Korea, but through armed communist parties taking power. It created the conditions for the Vietnamese revolution, the Cuban revolution of 1959-61 and the South Yemeni revolution of 1967-70.

The result is that the left as a whole, the Trotskyist left included, became addicted to the idea of revolution in a single country - and to the idea that such revolutions occur naturally, on timescales set by long-run historical national development and essentially separate from international political rhythms. The Spartacist International Communist League currently promotes small-nation nationalism - which could only have a strategic value for communists if the aim was to follow the national revolutions of the cold war era. Under present conditions it serves the geostrategic interests of the USA: small states can more easily be coerced.

On this point I am on common ground with comrades Fischer and van der Doelen: the idea of a chain of national revolutions fails, and it became obvious after 1979 that it fails. Nicaragua is the clearest example. Nicaragua could not follow Cuba, because the Soviet Union did not want it to - and could not intervene there, as it had in Cuba. It had been able to do so in Cuba only because events took place in the lame-duck phase of the Eisenhower presidency.

It had done so because the Soviet leadership was then posturing to the left in competition with the Chinese in the early stages of the Sino-Soviet split. There were many other cases during the 'cold war' in which Soviet geopolitical and diplomatic interests led not to the creation of partial clones of the Soviet regime (as in Yugoslavia, Albania, China, Vietnam, Cuba, South Yemen), but to the defeat and destruction of powerful communist parties (as, for example, in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia ...)

Nicaragua demonstrated what has happened every time since, Venezuela included. There have been serious revolutionary movements, and people have attempted to create councils and take power. But without a Soviet Union - without global dual power - taking power in a single country simply fails. The imperialist state can crush you through a combination of economic sanctions, subversion and covert operations of one sort or another.

Even the Russian revolution was not really a socialist revolution in a single country. It was a socialist revolution in one of the great European empires, complete with most of its colonial possessions. The capitalists did manage to strip away eastern Poland and the Baltic states, and that mattered: they were major industrial centres and major concentrations of the proletariat, so their loss weakened the class position of the proletariat in the USSR.

So the need for an international is real, and the comrades are right to say that we cannot imagine one being created on the back of a revolution in a single country, so untouched

by shortages, tyranny, sabotage and the need to fight sabotage, and by imperialist lies, that it becomes a shining beacon - a city on a hill that everyone else aspires to copy. The idea that Britain could do this because of its industrial strength is nonsense. The UK imports 40% of the food it consumes and much of the raw material for what remains of its industry. An attempt at socialism in one country here, without Europe-wide support, would end in catastrophe and mass starvation - and would teach everyone that revolutionary politics is a disaster and that we must work within whatever the United States allows us, which is less and less as time goes on.

Yet the bulk of the left still holds to the delusion that, if we could just make the revolution here, it would be a shining beacon and everyone else would follow, as with the Russian Revolution. That is completely false about the Russian Revolution itself. It took place in the midst of a world war, as part of a revolutionary movement that included the French army mutinies of 1917 and continued through the German, Austrian and Hungarian revolutions, the ‘world on fire’ of 1919 and the *Biennio Rosso* in Italy. The Russian Revolution was not the spark that lit the prairie fire: the prairie was already alight, and the Russian Revolution was part of that.

Too many

Comrades Fischer and van der Doelen go on to offer a descriptive criticism of the actually existing international organisations. It is an incomplete account, and the incompleteness matters.

One big absence is the Mandelites. I single them out because they are not an organisation with a single national mothership. The Mandelite Fourth International is a real organisation that is not immediately politically dependent on the French section - the former Ligue, now the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste - even if it is probably financially dependent on it. Compare the International Socialist Tendency, which is immediately dependent on the Socialist Workers Party; the Committee for a Workers’ International, dependent on the Socialist Party in England and Wales; and the Revolutionary Communist International, dependent on the Grantite Revolutionary Communist Party, formerly Socialist Appeal. I am not sure of the current position of the Spartacists, who had an American mothership in the Spartacist League of the United States, but now seem to have become more centred on their Quebec organisation. And there is a whole list of further absences: whatever the organisation around the French Lambertistes now is, the various organisations led out of Argentina, and so on.

This matters because the problem is not that people form national organisations in the belief that a breakthrough in one country will make world revolution possible. Rather, it is that the organisational conceptions underlying the Third International (and the Fourth) produce an endless proliferation of new internationals.

Nor is this only a Trotskyist phenomenon. There are multiple Maoist internationals. Besides the international meetings of ‘official communist’ parties that the article mentions, there is a splinter from them organised by the KKE, the Communist Party of Greece, which is distinguished by regarding Ukraine as an inter-imperialist war and by being more sceptical of the Chinese Communist Party than ‘official communist’ parties like the *Morning Star*’s CPB.

So the problem facing the left is not, as the comrades put it, that the chain of proletarian internationalism was broken in 1943. What we have instead is a multiplication - and a legitimisation

- of competing organisations at the international as well as the national level. This is shaped by particular political conceptions: anti-factionalism; the international as the “general staff of the world revolution”, an idea influenced in Comintern by the Prussian *grosser Generalstab* (‘great general staff’), the organising centre of the German armed forces in the 19th and early 20th centuries; and above all the notion that facing outwards to the masses lets you ignore ‘the sects’, meaning other groups you do not agree with.

The result is not that there is no international, but that there are endless internationals! There are too many internationals, just as there are too many left groups in every country - I cannot think of a country where there are not, though no doubt someone will.⁷

So the task of building an international is not posed as “reconstruct Comintern”, nor as “reforge the Fourth International”, nor as overcoming an excessively national left. On the contrary, the left is committed to internationalism. It is its other commitments - anti-factionalism, facing outwards to the masses, leapfrogging your competitors - that lead it to produce multiple, completely ineffective internationals.

Oil-slick

This brings us to the third element of comrade Fischer’s and van der Doelen’s proposal: an international campaign for a new international, uniting Marxists in an international faction. A faction of what?

I can imagine trying to build a faction within the KKE’s international conferences, or an external faction of the Mandelite Fourth International. I am not saying either would be right - only that these are the kinds of things an international faction could actually be a faction of. In our actual circumstances, there is no international equivalent of the Democratic Socialists of America in the US. Nor is there an international equivalent of the various broad-front attempts in this country - the Socialist Labour Party, the Socialist Alliance, Respect, Left Unity, Your Party. Nobody has attempted to build a broad-front international since the social forums movement lost its impetus with the return of imperialist war.

What remains of the Second International has been described as the ‘AFL-CIA’: the rightwing leadership of the American trade union movement allied itself with the CIA to reorganise labour movements elsewhere as vassals, held in subordination to the US. It has included - perhaps still does - the Pakistan People’s Party and the Indian National Congress: nationalist bourgeois parties. The international meetings of communist and workers’ parties do have serious political impact, which is why the KKE was forced to split over the question of inter-imperialist war. And then there are the competing groupings that Jack Conrad has rightly called ‘oil-slick internationals’: extraordinarily thin layers of communist oil spread across the vast, fluctuating sea of the international movement.

If the reality was the total absence of internationals, creating a new, ultra-small, organised international trend would be to raise the banner of the international. But the reality is multiple internationals. And, just like multiple small groups on the national level, the creation of multiple small internationals opposes the absolutely elementary interest of the working class in united action in spite of religious, etc, disagreement (which is the reason why the working class is the potential creator of socialism). The line of ‘facing outward to the masses’ supposes that the left is splintered because of its separation from the working class. The reality is the exact

reverse: the left is separated from the working class because of splintering.

So it is useful and valuable for ‘partyists’ to get together and coordinate. Yes, talk, please! It is an immediate concern for us in the CPGB that the ‘partyists’ of *Prometheus* refuse to talk to the CPGB, or that Anne McShane is excluded from Irish People Before Profit and the Marxist Republican tendency within it - which self-identifies as ‘partyist’ - because of her association with the CPGB.

A permanent correspondence committee would be valuable. Multilateral contact would be valuable, in place of the very informal bilateral talks we have had from time to time. We want more of that, and we need to improve on it.

But an international campaign for a new international would come across as simply creating another oil-slick international - partly because the layer of oil is too thin. There just are not enough of us. The CPGB is really small. The RSP in the Netherlands is not very big either: it may think of itself as significant at a few hundred members, but, measured against the kind of party objectively needed, a few hundred in the Netherlands is microscopic. The Marxist Unity Group in the US has had real influence in the DSA, pushing it towards taking political stands rather than being a lobby for social reform within the Democratic Party. That is good, but on the scale of the US (a 342 million population) the DSA itself of around 120,000 is not large (0.3% of the population), and MUG is much smaller.

The problem with oil-slick internationals is not the bad faith of comrades wanting internationals in their own image, with a mothership in England, the US, Argentina or France. It is that, because the forces are so weak, any attempt to create an organised international simply produces *another* oil slick. Hence the advice we can offer from the CPGB, for what it is worth: caution.

Short history

Finally, and briefly, on Comintern and the history of the internationals. The First International was created in 1864-65 and lasted until 1870-71, when it split over whether to advocate participation in elections or oppose it - the latter being the position of the Bakuninist wing. Marx, Engels and others proposed moving its headquarters to New York, giving us a short-lived Marxist international based there, followed by an equally short-lived anarchist and possibilist international based in Europe.

The Second International was created in 1889 and took its definitive form in 1896, split decisively with the Bakuninists, and committed itself to being an international of parties that stood for electoral intervention, together with trade unions that did not oppose it. It lasted for roughly two decades and blew up in 1914 as a result of World War I. It is worth noting that it was not only the right wing - the advocates of gradualist reformism - who backed their own states. Leftwingers did too: Parvus and his co-thinkers in the *Die Glocke* group, who had been leaders of the anti-imperialist wing of the SPD, became advocates of German victory.

Comintern was created in 1919-20 and dissolved in 1943, by which point it had not held a congress since 1935 - and that congress came seven years after the one before. It, too, had a limited existence, just as the Second International did.

There were other attempts. A ‘Two-and-a-Half’ International’ was attempted in the 1920s. A left-communist Fourth International was attempted in the 1920s and failed. The Trotskyists’ Fourth International was founded in the late 1930s; in 1940 it split into two roughly equal

halves over Soviet defencism, and split again, among those who had not already gone, over proletarian military policy versus revolutionary defeatism. As far as I can see, it was reassembled in 1946, largely on the basis of people who had broken with Trotsky before 1938 over their willingness to build broad fronts with popular-frontists - not entirely, but substantially. Since then there has been splinter upon splinter, alongside repeated attempts to reconstitute Comintern by the Maoists, and by the ‘official communists’ in the form of the Cominform and subsequent meetings of communist and workers’ parties.

The upshot is that calling for Comintern’s re-establishment does not make sense. I can see why the comrades might have taken this approach. We in the CPGB assert a title to our party’s name - not as a legal continuity, which we are not, but on the basis that in 1991 the comrades of the Leninist faction denied the Eurocommunists’ right to take away our CPGB membership rights and duties. We have maintained the name ever since. It might make sense to do the same with Comintern if some faction had denied the Soviet leadership’s right to wind it up in 1943 and had kept the idea alive ever since.

But to call for the reconstitution of Comintern 83 years after its dissolution is, in essence, to call for its *uncritical* restoration - complete with the reasons it failed. That is not the new international we need.

A new international will inevitably be built through a process of regroupment: splits and fusions among the existing Marxist left and the existing Marxist international tendencies. In that sense the comrades are right to talk of work within and among the existing international formations. But you cannot actually be a faction of a dozen, or two dozen, different organisations. In the present situation we are simply not in a position to pursue that policy.

Setting the goal as reconstituting Comintern is a misconception. It fails to take account of why Comintern failed, and of the fact that its other components were in no position to defend it against the CPSU. It is a misleading strategic objective. Of the comrades’ three more limited practical proposals, the first two are potentially useful. The third is not ●

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Notes

1. *Weekly Worker* September 24: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1602/re-establish-comintern.
2. cosmonautmag.com/2026/09/letter-back-to-comintern-the-struggle-for-international-communist-regroupment.
3. partisanmagazine.org/2026/09/22/back-to-comintern-the-struggle-for-international-communist-regroupment.
4. prometheus-mag.com/2026/09/15/the-struggle-for-international-communist-regroupment.
5. This label is potentially misleading, since some people identify themselves as ‘partyists’, but balk at the necessities of creating a party: that is, freedom of speech, the rejection of anti-factionalism and, on the other hand, the organising discipline needed to raise resources and publish. But let us use that label for now.
6. www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/ch01.htm.
7. In the discussion at the OCF, comrade Jack Conrad pointed to the remaining ‘bureaucratic socialist’ regimes (or regimes with this political integument) as lacking multiple competing left groups (China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba) ... Obviously, we do not favour the suppression of competing tendencies ‘from above’.

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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

**We are
revolutionary
defencists in
Iran**

Realities of siege warfare

Internationalists oppose US imperialism and simultaneously maintain complete political independence from the Islamic Republic. The struggles of the working class and the poor are central, declares **Yassamine Mather**

There is a tendency, particularly in sections of the international left, to look at the continuing confrontation between Iran and the United States and conclude that, because Washington has failed to impose a decisive military settlement, Iran must therefore be winning. That is far too simple. Survival is not the same thing as victory, and at this stage the US remains militarily dominant in the region. What is required is a sober assessment of what is actually happening: with the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's economy and, increasingly, the American military being used to prosecute the war indirectly.

Iran's threat over the Strait of Hormuz was straightforward enough: if the Islamic Republic could not export its oil, neither would its Arab neighbours. For a period, this appeared capable of inflicting enormous damage on the world economy. Now, however, the picture is considerably more complicated.

Shipping through the Strait has resumed to a significant degree, although claims that traffic is back to anything approaching normal have to be treated carefully. Lloyd's List Intelligence recorded 117 non-Iranian-linked transits between September 14 and 20, compared with 106 the previous week - a figure initially reported as 97 before unrecorded transits were verified.¹

That revision is itself revealing. Many tankers travel with their transponders switched off and are identified only later. This explains why real-time websites can produce apparently catastrophic figures for Hormuz, while retrospective industry data show considerably more traffic. How ships are getting through is contested. Some reports suggest that fees are being paid to Iran in exchange for safe passage, while more recently there are indications that US naval escorts for tankers are moving up and down the narrow waterway.

More important still is what has happened to oil volumes. It is estimated that at least 16.5 million barrels of crude a day left the Gulf region in September - roughly the pre-war level ... if Iran itself is excluded. Yet around 40% of regional crude now bypasses Hormuz altogether, compared with about 17% before the war.

In other words, the oil industry has built an expensive and dangerous wartime workaround of pipelines, shuttle tankers, ship-to-ship transfers and military protection. This is not a return to normal commercial shipping. Refined petroleum products, liquefied natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas and petrochemical exports remain much more severely disrupted.

Nevertheless, the system is functioning well enough to undermine Iran's original strategy. Tehran has not been able to win acceptance to the notion that, if Iranian oil cannot leave the Gulf, nobody else's can either. Iran itself is now in a much weaker position: its own crude exports have been reduced to negligible levels by the American naval blockade.

But the ability of the US to impose enormous economic costs on Iran should not be confused with an ability to impose a straightforward military or political settlement.

Asymmetry

In another sign of an asymmetric confrontation, on October 4 the US withdrew all its bombers from RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Throughout the war, Fairford had been a key operating location for American strategic bombers, B-1s and B-52s, flying combat missions against Iran. Donald Trump linked the withdrawal to a specific threat against the base, while vice-president JD Vance said the aircraft had been moved "out of an abundance of caution". Either way, it is a striking indication of the vulnerability of US forces.

On September 27, five men were arrested near Fairford after reports of three suspicious vehicles heading towards the base. They were initially held under the Explosives Act and subsequently on suspicion of 'preparing a terrorist act'. No explosives were found, although a quantity of petrol was recovered. The five were released on bail and remain under investigation.

The episode inevitably raised the question of Iranian involvement, and that possibility cannot simply be dismissed. Tehran has repeatedly warned that bases used to launch attacks on Iranian territory could be regarded as legitimate targets. 'Counter-terrorism' investigators are reportedly also examining possible links to Russia or non-state groups. What deserves considerable scepticism is Trump's much more definite account. He suggested that the plot had been uncovered through joint American and British intelligence work and that the suspects were "looking to do big damage". The public account is rather different. The BBC's security correspondent, Frank Gardner, pointed to "a clear inconsistency" between Trump's version and what appears to have happened.

Washington nevertheless clearly took the threat to Fairford seriously. The precise relationship between the arrests, Iran and the withdrawal of the bombers has not been publicly established. This brings us to the more interesting aspect of Fairford: the extraordinary economics of modern warfare.

A B-1 has an official US air force unit cost of approximately \$317 million. The nature of the threat to Fairford has not been disclosed, but the weapons that can threaten such an aircraft, whether a drone or a crude improvised device, cost a minute fraction of that. They do not even have to destroy a bomber to achieve a significant result. If the possibility of an attack is credible enough to force the US withdrawal of 12 extremely expensive aircraft from a forward operating base, then a comparatively cheap threat has already imposed substantial costs on a vastly wealthier military power.

This is one of the central



Strait of Hormuz

asymmetries of contemporary warfare. Washington has overwhelming superiority in conventional firepower, but it also has costly, concentrated assets that must be protected against cheap almost throwaway weapons. Iran does not need to reproduce US military capabilities in order to threaten them.

Removing the bombers from Fairford does not, of course, remove America's ability to attack Iran: they can fly from the continental USA with aerial refuelling. Moreover Washington retains formidable naval and air assets in the region.

Internal effects

For ordinary Iranians, the question is not whether Washington or Tehran is ahead on some geopolitical scorecard. It is what this prolonged war of attrition is doing to them. Siege warfare - blockade, sanctions and secondary sanctions - is combining with an already profound domestic economic crisis.

The collapse of the currency gives some indication of its scale. When the popular protests began in late December 2025, the free-market rate was around 142,000 toman to the dollar. By late September 2026 it had passed 250,000 toman. The distinction between rials and toman is worth making, because international reporting frequently creates confusion: ten rials equal one toman, so a rate of 2.5 million rials to the dollar means 250,000 toman.

The currency, however, is only part of the story. Official figures from the Statistical Centre of Iran put year-on-year inflation in September at 89.8%, with 12-month average inflation at 73.6%. Food inflation has been even more devastating: in August, food and beverage prices were 127% higher than a year earlier. This makes nominal wage increases almost meaningless: a worker receiving a 30% or even 40% pay rise is still suffering an enormous fall in real income.

Currency depreciation intensifies the process. Iran may manufacture a substantial proportion of its medicines and other goods domestically, but manufacturers depend on imported machinery, components and raw materials. A collapsing rial therefore feeds back into the price of supposedly home-produced goods. The consequences are visible in shortages, rapidly rising medicine prices and reduced everyday food consumption levels.

This creates three overlapping grievances among workers: wages and pensions that no longer cover basic living costs; wages, pensions

and benefits that are not paid on time; and growing insecurity, layoffs and unemployment.

There have been repeated protests by municipal, industrial and oil and gas workers, nurses, teachers, pensioners and others. Municipal workers in some areas have reported months of unpaid wages. Factory workers have protested over both wage arrears and insecure employment. Nurses face low salaries, delayed payments and compulsory overtime. Pensioners have demonstrated repeatedly over arrears, health insurance failures and the rising cost of living. Their demands are particularly significant, because they bring together several dimensions of the crisis: incomes below subsistence level, unpaid entitlements, deteriorating healthcare and rising inflation.

This is not a unified national workers' movement. It is better understood as a series of localised and sectoral struggles increasingly driven by the same underlying material conditions. Those conditions could bring people together with very different occupational and political histories, including sections of the lower middle class.

Of course, economic desperation does not automatically produce political generalisation, let alone socialist consciousness. Independent working class organisation remains weak and heavily repressed, and workers can respond by emigrating, taking second jobs or retreating into individual survival strategies just as readily as by organising collectively. Nevertheless, the material foundations for repeated social explosions are clearly present.

One particularly revealing expression of the crisis is the growing number of women turning to street vending. The phenomenon is not new. Women have sold cosmetics, clothes and other goods in the women-only carriages of the Tehran metro since at least the 2000s. Later, social media - above all Instagram and Telegram - created another space in which women could establish micro-businesses despite the surrounding formal economy.

War and repeated internet shutdowns have disrupted much of that informal economy. Women selling food, handicrafts, jewellery and clothes through Instagram suddenly found themselves without customers. Meanwhile, the transport and service industries were also hit by the war. The result has been a movement from the digital back on to the street. Women with university degrees can be found setting up tables on pavements and selling food, drinks or handmade goods.

This produces a revealing contradiction: more people are trying to sell because they desperately need an income, while fewer people can afford to buy. One vendor described 10 people stopping at her stall with perhaps one reluctantly buying something. Inflation also means that even successful vendors cannot necessarily replace what they sell,

as today's takings may not cover tomorrow's wholesale prices. The street stall is therefore both a form of resistance to economic exclusion and evidence of the depth of the crisis. The spread of informal self-employment should not be romanticised as entrepreneurial dynamism. For many, it is survival in the absence of viable wages, jobs or social protection.

Real victory

A state can survive, while its population becomes dramatically poorer. For socialists, this is not a secondary consideration. We cannot measure 'victory' by asking whether the Islamic Republic has successfully resisted the US, while ignoring what is happening to its people.

Opposition to American imperialism does not require us to prettify the Iranian state. Equally, recognising the enormous economic damage inflicted on Iran does not mean accepting Trump's claims that American military superiority is producing a decisive victory.

For internationalists, the task is therefore not to cheer either state from the sidelines. It is to oppose the imperialist war drive, while maintaining complete political independence from the Islamic Republic, and to place at the centre of our analysis the struggles of the working class and the rural and urban poor.

That is why we take a position of revolutionary defencism. We want to see the defeat of the US and victory - real victory - can best be achieved by empowering the Iranian masses through demands such as imposing strict rationing, confiscating corrupt wealth, the renationalisation of privatised industries, ending censorship and freedom to publish, demonstrate, organise and strike. Instead of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the hated basiji, the people have to arm themselves and be organised into a nationwide militia system. Women must have full legal equality. The morality police must go. Kurdistan and other minority nationalities should be granted the right to self-determination - that way the unity of Iran will be voluntary, not forced.

Above all, in place of the living-dead supreme leader, the council of guardians and the carefully selected majlis, there must come the constituent assembly born of a popular uprising and elected through universal suffrage. Sovereign power must be vested with the people as a whole.

A government of workers and the rural and urban poor will be a far more potent force than any number of mines, drones or ballistic missiles - reaching out with an internationalist message of peace, democracy and socialism. It will surely get a ready hearing, not only regionally, but globally - not least in the heart of the beast, the United States itself ●

Notes

1. www.lloydslistintelligence.com/resources/blog/strait-of-hormuz-brief-30-september-2026.

SUPPLEMENT



Three years of genocidal war

Zack Polanski's Green Party is being demonised as racist because it opposes Zionist racism and dares call for a single-state solution. But is the single state, as traditionally demanded by Palestinian militants and the revolutionary left, actually achievable? What about the two-state solution? **Jack Conrad** presents the communist view

Since the Gaza 'ceasefire' came into effect in October 2025, Israel has killed at least 1,400 Palestinians and injured another 5,000.¹ Attacks occur virtually daily. That means well over 75,000 Palestinians have died since October 7 2023 (there are reportedly 10,000 missing). Approximately 175,000 have been injured: one in 13 of the entire population.

Something like 80% of buildings are badly damaged or completely destroyed. According to the UN, between 1.9 million and 2.1 million have been displaced - around 90%-98% of the population.² Most now live in 'protected camps', hemmed in behind Israel's yellow line. They make do with tents, plastic sheets and makeshift shacks. Israel occupies roughly 70% of Gaza. And, of course, Israel controls, and severely restricts, access to water, power, food and medicines. Malnutrition is common, especially amongst children. Diarrhoea, water-borne diseases, fever and respiratory illnesses saw an estimated 8,500 non-violent deaths in the first 16 months of the war alone.³

Meanwhile, there is the West Bank. At least 1,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7 2023. Nearly 9,000 are imprisoned or otherwise detained. There is systematic abuse and torture.⁴ And the IDF and Israeli settlers remorselessly press on with their incursions, land

seizures, demolitions and campaign of intimidation.

Albeit using coded language, Benjamin Netanyahu is quite explicit about wanting to see the Palestinians exterminated: he directly equated them with the Amaleks in the Hebrew bible during an official address on October 28 2023.⁵ Needless to say, the ancient Israelites were commanded by Yahweh himself to "blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven".⁶ Israeli audiences are all too familiar with this and other such homicidal passages.

Yoav Gallant, the former defence minister, can be similarly cited about fighting "human animals" and wanting to cut off electricity, food, fuel - "everything". Israeli president Isaac Herzog branded the Palestinians as being collectively responsible for the killing of Israeli soldiers and civilians on October 7 2023. Other ministers and former ministers too.⁷

Despite the appalling statistics and damning statements, Andy Burnham's government stubbornly refuses to admit that Israel is conducting a genocidal war. Formally the position is to wait till a definitive ruling by the glacially slow international courts. London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, shows no such inhibitions. He says a genocide is occurring. The same goes for countless voices internationally, including the UN commission of inquiry. Note South Africa has an ongoing genocide case

against Israel before the International Court of Justice.

So what is genocide? The briefest answer: it is the "deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, ethnic, national or religious group, either in whole or in part." Coined in 1944 by Polish-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, it was officially codified as an international crime by the UN in the 1948 Genocide Convention. Under its definition there has to be (a) *intent* and (b) *acts*, which, besides killing, include other things like causing serious harm to a group and the denial of food, water, medicine and power.⁸

Can there be any reasonable doubt of Israel being guilty as charged? The only honest answer is emphatically 'no'. After October 7 2023 the *intent* was clearly there ... and, as we shall argue, well before that. The *acts* of killing, destruction and displacement after October 7 2023, as enumerated above, surely speak for themselves.

Not that there has been no change compared with Sir Keir Starmer. There has been. Andy Burnham condemned Israeli settlements on the West Bank and accused the country's leaders of war crimes at the 81st UN general assembly in September 2026. Foreign secretary Ed Miliband even talked of 'ethnic cleansing'. Illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank are now formally sanctioned.⁹ British financial supply lines have been cut too.

The shift seen with the Burnham government might be put down to Labour regrowing its moral backbone. But that would be horribly naive. Labour has never had a moral backbone. As a party, especially in government, it has loyally served British capitalism and British imperial interests. Hence support for empire, colonial wars, nuclear weapons and the 'special relationship' with the US and its Middle East attack dog. The Jewish Labour Movement (aka Poale Zion) has been a Labour affiliate since 1920 and both Andy Burnham and Ed Miliband were till recently closely associated with Labour Friends of Israel. No, while the change is important, it is of nuance, not substance, and stems entirely from cold political calculation.

The last general election in July 2024 saw the return of five explicitly pro-Palestine independent MPs, most notably Jeremy Corbyn in Islington North. In six other constituencies, candidates running on the same sort of pro-Palestine platform came second. Muslim and left voters deserted Labour in droves. And, of course, in Britain and across the world there have been massive solidarity demonstrations. Zack Polanski's Green Party enormously benefited from this *sustained* upsurge (that and the abject failure of Corbyn's Your Party). Membership has more than tripled and there were sweeping successes in the

May 2026 local elections, not least in London's Hackney, where the Greens took the council from the historically incumbent Labour Party.

Burnham wants those votes back. Nonetheless, despite the diplomatic tiffs, the verbal gestures and token sanctions, the arms trade with Israel continues, as do 'normal' commercial relations (worth around £5.9 billion annually). Britain can only go so far, assuming the will was there, without upsetting the US hegemon and thereby suffering potentially dire consequences.

Expansionism

Israel needs to be understood not as a good Zionist state falling into the hands of bad Zionists, such as Netanyahu, Gallant and Herzog. No, from its beginnings (and pre-beginnings), Israel has been a settler-colonial project that by its own self-definition is based on expansionism, war and displacement.

Zionists typically claim that Jews have a right to the whole of mandate Palestine (either because of the approval of the Balfour declaration by the League of Nations in July 1922 or Yahweh's promise to Abraham in *Genesis*). Having painstakingly established control over some 6%-7% of mandate Palestine through land-purchases, capital transfers, including the Haavara Agreement with Nazi Germany, and tight political

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organisation, the New Yishuv - the Jewish state-in-the-making - launched its long intended war against the indigenous population, beginning in November 1947.

With the 1949 armistice Israel had possession of some 77% of mandate Palestine. The nakba (disaster) saw the expulsion of between 700,000 and 750,000 Palestinians. The 1967 Arab-Israel six-day war allowed Israel to incorporate east Jerusalem and occupy the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Some 280,000 to 400,000 Palestinians were driven out or otherwise displaced. Palestinians call it the naksa (setback), but it can just as easily be called the second nakba.

Israel is now in the midst of another round of violent expansionism: Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza. In Lebanon and Syria the pattern follows the classic ‘defensive imperialism’ of ‘buffer zones’. In the case of southern Syria the new ‘buffer zone’ is there to defend the Golan Heights ‘buffer zone’ (annexed in 1981).

However, when it comes to the West Bank and Gaza, the main drive is ideological, not military. On the West Bank, Israel has uprooted around 40,000 Palestinians since October 7 2023. There are already approximately 700,000 Israeli settlers. Meanwhile, Gaza stands on the brink of starvation, ethnic cleansing and extermination - facilitated by the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. A third nakba is clearly in the offing.

True, there are far-right elements who on ideological grounds advocate expansion into Lebanon (up to the Litani river) and into Syria (the Mount Hermon area). We are referring to groups such as Uri Tzafon (‘Awaken, Oh North’) and Halutzei HaBashan (‘Pioneers of the Bashan’). They have received explicit backing from government ministers: Bezalel Smotrich, finance, and Idit Silman, environmental protection. Their project is a *greater* Greater Israel. Nonetheless, mainstream Israeli military planners view operations in Lebanon and Syria (beyond the Golan Heights) as tactical zones, which can be appropriately bartered for concessions of one kind or another.¹⁰

As an aside, it is worth mentioning those leftwing Panglossians here in Britain who claimed that Israel “cannot win” in Gaza, that Israel is “unequivocally losing” its war in Gaza, or that Israel has already “lost in Gaza”.¹¹ We hear similar nonsense with Iran supposedly beating the US today. Topsy-turvy claims based on Hamas continuing to hold Israeli captives and Hamas continuing to survive as an armed body.

Well, there are no longer any Israeli captives. All have been handed over (including the dead). More to the point, Israel’s war aims were never really about totally destroying Hamas. Its social roots are deep and surely enduring. No, the defining, ongoing, war aim of Netanyahu and his cabinet is to remove enough of the indigenous population to allow the realisation of their Greater Israel: from Gaza the Palestinians will probably be driven into Egypt’s Sinai, from the West Bank probably into Jordan.

October 7

The part desperate, part audacious Operation al-Aqsa Flood prison break on October 7 2023, carried out by Hamas and other sections of the Joint Room resistance movement, caught Israel altogether unprepared - a “complete failure”, now openly acknowledged by its military.¹²

Not surprisingly there have been all manner of conspiracy theories about Netanyahu and his cronies being in some way “deliberately” complicit in allowing the whole thing to happen.¹³ It was, after all, a year in preparation. Warnings were consistently ignored, that is for sure. Hamas military

commanders were themselves certainly surprised by the ability of their al-Qassam fighters to go way beyond what had been originally planned as a suicide mission. Expectations were of something like an 80% casualty rate. Military targets, IDF outposts, police stations thereby gave way to what Hamas euphemistically calls “some faults” in the operation: the totally pointless killing of innocent civilians (resulting in baseless stories of beheading babies and mass rapes).¹⁴

October 7 did, though, provide Netanyahu with the political excuse needed for the IDF to pulverise its way into Gaza (and upping settler terrorism in the West Bank). True, Israeli public opinion subsequently cleaved into what might be called the ‘peace party’ and the ‘war party’. Nonetheless, the war party commanded a slim Knesset majority and that grew into a clear public majority for the attacks on Iran (which 83% of Jewish Israelis supported, while only 16% opposed¹⁵). Netanyahu himself has every reason to keep the wars in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran going on and on ... after all, not only does he want to keep his coalition together, remain prime minister and stay out of jail. He wants a Greater Israel.

There are profound differences over the constitutional set-up in this would-be Greater Israel. General (Liberal) Zionism says it is committed to market capitalism, secularism and the rule of law (which can, of course, see unelected judges overrule Knesset votes). The main political expression of Liberal Zionism is nowadays found in centrist parties, such as Yesh Atid. In ‘theory’ they accept a two-state solution, but in the name of ‘security’ insist on Israel retaining large blocks of the West Bank and refuse to accept any Palestinian right of return. There is, though, Likud, which resulted from a historical merger between liberal and revisionist Zionism (Likud’s official name being the National Liberal Movement). Ideologically it is, like Yisrael Beiteinu, neoliberal, far-right nationalist and populist.

However, in terms of constructing governmental coalitions, Likud, for the moment, relies on religious Zionists, who envisage a Halakhic kingdom ruled by *Torah* law, as it was in the “days of King David and King Solomon”.¹⁶ Hence, while Yisrael Beiteinu is militantly anticlerical, Likud has quietly diluted its commitment to secularism. The October 27 general election will doubtless shuffle the pack, but not by much (it would, however, be pointless to speculate on outcomes here, except to note the historic shift to the right).

Geographically, as already mentioned, religious Zionists hanker after a greater Greater Israel - based on various biblical passages: *Genesis*, *Numbers*, *Ezekiel*. At its largest extent their Eretz Israel stretches from the Nile to the Euphrates.¹⁷ Of course, any such Israel would come with a poisoned chalice: an oppressed Arab *supermajority*. The Zionist conquistadors would have to permanently deny them elementary rights. The newly acquired Arab population would be far too big to do much else with (ie, expulsion or extermination).

Either way, Israel is predicated on expansionism. The *aliyah* (Hebrew for ‘ascent’ - or migration to Israel) constitutes a fundamental part of the Zionist project and is enshrined in Israel’s ‘law of return’ (enacted by the Knesset in July 1950). Any Jew, no matter where they live, no matter how dubious their Jewish antecedence, has the legal right to assisted settlement in Israel, as well as automatic citizenship.

A heterogeneous mixture of the genuinely desperate, the cruelly duped, secular dreamers, religious fanatics, economic chancers and Wizz Air second-homers have come

to the promised land over the years. Between 1948 and 1992 Israel took in 2,242,500 Jewish migrants. The bulk from eastern Europe - displaced by World War II - and the centres of Jewry in the Arab world and the Soviet Union. Some 85% of Ethiopia’s 170,000 Jewish population, the Falasha, or Habashim, have gone to Israel under the law of return too. Before October 7, however, the flow of migrants had been reduced to a mere trickle. With October 7, that inward trickle became a 470,000 outward flood ... but, predictably, all but a few soon returned to what is their national homeland.¹⁸

Israel needs people. Or, put more accurately, Israel needs *Jewish* people. Even a little Israel relies on long-term net Jewish immigration ... net Jewish *emigration*, if it were sustained, would indeed mean that the “collapse of Israel has become foreseeable”.¹⁹

Today Israel has a record population of just over 10 million.²⁰ However, some 20% of them are Palestinian Arabs. They are, of course, treated as second-class citizens in what is rightly regarded as an apartheid state. Officially, after all, Israel was founded as and continues to be a Jewish state for Jewish people. Meanwhile, there are some 5.9 million UN-registered Palestinian refugees - in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.²¹ There is also a Palestinian diaspora living in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, the US, Britain, Germany, Chile, Argentina and many other countries besides.

Divide and rule

Before October 7 the Netanyahu government clearly thought it had sufficiently pacified the Palestinians to the point where they posed no serious threat. Within the borders of pre-1967 Israel, the Arab population voted for Islamic and left lists. But, while that means the occasional nuisance due to the fine balance in the Knesset, it is manageable. The same appeared to go for Gaza and the West Bank.

Palestinians were reassuringly split between Hamas rule in Gaza and Fatah rule in the West Bank. True, uncompromisingly, the 1988 Hamas charter demanded an end to the Zionist state of Israel and its replacement by a single Islamic state of Palestine. However, Hamas offered a “long-term truce” in return for Israel withdrawing from all territories it has occupied since 1967: in effect a two-state ‘solution’.

Israel actually encouraged the formation and growth of Hamas from the mid-1980s onwards in order to weaken Fatah. But, following its landslide victory in the January 2006 elections and the Fatah June coup in the West Bank, Israel imposed an asphyxiating blockade on Gaza. That said, since 2018 Netanyahu’s government allowed Hamas to receive “infusions” of Qatari cash and granted tens of thousands of work permits to Gazan residents. The idea was to keep the Palestinians divided and thereby render any Israel-Palestine two-state ‘solution’ practically unachievable. Hence the West Bank was treated as a “burden”, while Gaza was treated as an “asset”.²² That is, until what has been called ‘Israel’s Pearl Harbour’.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation, dominated by Fatah, presides over a series of fragmented Arab reservations on the West Bank grandly called the Palestinian Authority. Its president, Mahmoud Abbas, demands a two-state solution and roundly condemns Israel’s assault on Gaza. He is, however, to all intents and purposes a creature of Israel, a collaborator, a quisling. To put it mildly, he is widely despised.

The PLO’s present line dates back to 1988, when the demand for a return to the *status quo ante* 1948 was formally abandoned. Fatah had been steadily moving in this direction

since the mid-70s; however, the final turning point was the US-brokered Oslo accord, signed in August 1993 by PLO chair Yasser Arafat and Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. The PLO effectively conceded Israeli hegemony over the whole of mandate Palestine in return for local self-government in Gaza and the West Bank. Abject surrender. The vital questions of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the right of Palestinians to return to their lands were put aside. A diplomatic triumph for the US and Israel.

Nation-in-arms

Following the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel’s main arms supplier has been the US (before that it was France). Not that there was an instant love affair between the two countries. George Marshall, president Harry S Truman’s secretary of state, was more than cool about recognising Israel in May 1948. Nor was John Foster Dulles, Dwight Eisenhower’s secretary of state, pro-Israel. It was the rise of Arab nationalism, and the turn towards the Soviet Union, instigated by Egypt’s Gamal Abdul Nasser, that led to a US shift.

From 1958 the US-Israel alliance slowly expanded in scope and took its present form after the Yom Kippur War of 1973.²³ Noam Chomsky, it should be noted, dates US support for the Greater Israel position to 1970, when Henry Kissinger succeeded in “taking over Middle East affairs”.²⁴ Either way, that relationship solidified in the 1970s to the point where Israel effectively became an American outpost. US and Israeli armed forces are nowadays integrated through the US Central Command (Centcom) - regional air defences, intelligence and active combat operations being closely coordinated.²⁵

By any measure, US economic and military aid to Israel has been considerable. In the 1946-2024 period it amounted to well over \$310 billion (in constant 2022 dollars). Today Washington’s largesse goes to ensure that Israel maintains its QME (qualitative military edge). Israel is on a short list of “major non-Nato allies” that gives privileged access to the most advanced US military platforms and technologies. And there is an agreement to supply it with a military package worth some \$3.8 billion annually till 2028.²⁶ In return for imperial sponsorship, Israel acts as a US “strategic asset” in the Middle East (a region which, it just so happens, possesses something like 50% of the world’s readily accessible oil reserves).²⁷

Incidentally, there were those on the left who foolishly welcomed the election of Barack Obama in 2008 - the *Morning Star*’s Communist Party of Britain, George Galloway, Stop the War Coalition - because they hoped he would chart a fundamentally different, peaceful, even-handed course in the Middle East. As we predicted at the time, they were bound to be “sadly disappointed”.²⁸ Whatever the skin pigmentation of the president, America is determined to reverse its decline and that means that big-power antagonisms become ever more acute. Indeed, Obama and his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, undertook the “pivot to Asia” in 2016²⁹: the main aim clearly being to block the rise of China - a policy seamlessly continued by the Biden and Trump administrations.

When it came to Israel, there was, of course, no change: unwavering US support combined with a prolonged economic, diplomatic and military campaign to tame, degrade and maybe bring about regime change in Tehran. This meant guaranteeing the attack dog’s QME. However, even without US sponsorship, Israel has repeatedly fought, invaded and defeated its Arab neighbours: 1948, 1956 and 1967. After that there followed the 1973 war

with Egypt and Syria, and four wars in Lebanon: 1978, 1982, 2006, 2023-).

Israel’s armed forces are vastly superior, compared with any Arab country or any conceivable combination of them. It is not just American finance, weapons and spy satellites: Israel’s IDF has the edge, when it comes to battle experience, leadership and morale. Haim Bresheeth-Zabner calls it “an army like no other”.³⁰ We should add that Israel has at least 140 nuclear warheads ... and the means to deliver them from land, sea and sky.

Israel is, in fact, a “nation-in-arms” (Ben-Gurion). The IDF constituting the spinal cord of national identity: not country of origin, religious sect or political affiliation. Obviously, this does not apply to the *Haredim* (Ultra-Orthodox Jews) who make up around 18%-19% of the Israeli-Jewish population. In fact, they represent the absolute exception to the rule about the IDF equalling Israeliness. On religious grounds their young men steadfastly refuse to be conscripted. Their *parasitic* occupation is studying the *Torah* (while living on social security and various state subsidies). Nonetheless, with secular (*Hiloni*), traditional (*Masorti*) and national-religious (*Dati Leumi*) Israelis, conscription into the IDF has forged the “new Jew” - as imagined by Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Coherence

Israel’s notoriously fractious politics misleads unwary pundits. At least a dozen blocs - most with multiple components - are represented in the Knesset. Too many only see the heated blame game over October 7, the desperate attempts of Netanyahu to avoid corruption charges, the mass protests brought about by government attempts at judicial reform and the secular-religious divide. They conclude that Israel lacks the elemental cohesion needed for a viable nation-state. A mistake.

There is a defining ‘security consensus’ against the Palestinian enemy within and without. Virtually the entire Israeli-Jewish political spectrum unitedly oppose any kind of *democratic* settlement with the Palestinians. The nationalist and religious hard right, including Netanyahu’s Likud, has absolutely no truck with any notion of Palestinian statehood. Centrist Zionists, including the Democrats, merely talk the two-state talk. Only the Islamic and left blocs, Hadash-Ta’al and Ra’am, which rely on Israeli-Arab votes, are serious about a two-state solution: and that means Palestinians settling for the West Bank and Gaza, and nothing more.

Working class politics in Israel - that is, Israeli-Jewish working class politics - hardly exists, at least at this moment in time, as an effective collectivity. Historically there has been a remorseless shift from voting for the Labor Party to parties of the right and far right in an attempt to preserve national privileges. The Jewish-Israeli working class being a labour aristocracy that has seen its social power substantially eroded by years of neoliberalism.³¹ In 1983 membership of the trade union federation, Histadrut, stood at 1.6 million; today it is around 570,000. Histadrut, note, once the spearhead of Zionist colonisation, has been shorn of its role in health, banking and as a very substantial employer in its own right.

Histadrut needs to be put into the context of colonisation. Marxists have distinguished between various types of colonies: plantation colonies, exploitation colonies, colonies properly so-called, etc. Broadly the colonisation of the India, Congo, South Africa type saw the exploiters enslave people, gaining a fat profit from the native workforce, including

peasant farmers, through all manner of barely concealed forms of robbery, cheating and double dealing. That went hand-in-hand with staffing an army officer corps, running a bureaucracy and managing railroads, docks, etc. The colonisers therefore constituted a relatively narrow caste, who often maintained close ties with the imperial homeland (to which they often returned, having made their fortunes).

Nonetheless, it must be understood that in terms of political economy Israel is what Karl Kautsky called a “work colony”³² or what Moshé Machover prefers to call an “exclusion colony”.³³ Instead of the colonisers constituting themselves a narrow, often highly privileged caste, the colonisers make up the full spectrum of classes: bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, small farmers, workers, unemployed reserve workers, etc. Instead of relying on the labour of the indigenous population, it is either displaced, marginalised or driven to the point of extinction. Examples: USA, Canada, Australia.

Israel is definitely an exclusion colony. Despite present-day claims, including by those who should know better, there are not “two kinds of Zionism”, the first being a “legitimate liberation movement” against anti-Semitism, and the second, which “ethnically cleanses Palestinians” (Peter Tatchell).³⁴ Zionism sought collaboration with late Russian tsarism. The same went for early German Nazism. Tsarism, Nazism and Zionism alike wanted the ‘Yids out’.

Zionism is, and always was, as presented, crucially in Herzl’s foundational *Der Judenstaat* (1896), a colonial-settler project. What marked it out was that Zionism began by envisaging Jewish labour playing the vanguard role: “The poorest will go first to cultivate the soil. In accordance with a preconceived plan, they will construct roads, bridges, railways and telegraph installations; regulate rivers; and build their own dwellings; their labour will create trade, trade will create markets and markets will attract new settlers.”³⁵ Hence, whatever the socialistic pretensions of Labor Zionism, from the beginning Israel owed far more to the *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) ideology of late 19th century European reaction than anything remotely progressive.

Lenni Brenner makes the salient point:

Enthusiasm for *Blut und Boden* were part of Zionism before the first modern Zionist ever left Europe. Race Zionism was a curious offshoot of racial anti-Semitism. True, these Zionists argued, the Jews were a pure race, certainly purer than, say, the Germans who, as even the pan-Germanics conceded, had a huge admixture of Slavic blood. But to these Zionists, even their racial purity could not overcome the one flaw in Jewish existence: they did not have their own Jewish *Boden*. If the Teutonic racists could see themselves as *Übermensch*en (supermen), these Hebrew racists did not see the Jews in that light; rather, it was the reverse. They believed that because they lacked their own *Boden* the Jews were *Untermensch*en and therefore, for their “hosts”, little more than leeches: the world pest.³⁶

To get themselves the soil necessary for national salvation, the Zionists, for good ideological reasons, lighted upon Palestine. What marked them out, when they went there, was not that to begin with they were a minority of the population in Ottoman, and then mandate, Palestine. No, the Zionist project relied on propertyless migrants coming from all manner of different countries, while exercising “no coercive power over the indigenous population”.³⁷

That began to change with the formation of the *Haganah* militia, but it was poorly armed and could only manage defensive operations till the 1940s. At first the Zionists were substantially dependent on external sources of capital too. After all, they had to purchase land from wealthy native owners and most certainly relied on the good will of an imperial sponsor (to begin with, Britain, which agreed the Balfour declaration in November 1917). This in the expectation of “forming for England ‘a little loyal Jewish Ulster’ in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism”³⁸). The Ottoman empire was about to be carved-up by Anglo-French imperialism and that necessitated finding, or creating, willing collaborators. France promoted the historically established Maronite Christians in mandate Lebanon, the British turned to the incoming Zionist Jews in mandate Palestine.

Histadrut played a determining role in what was to become the political economy of Israel. It organised Jewish workers and forced the Jewish capitalist class to grant all manner of concessions - not least barring indigenous, cheaper, Arab labour from whole sectors of the economy (relaxed somewhat after statehood). Histadrut also provided Labor Zionism with the money, the votes and the organisation needed to make it the dominant force politically from the mid-1930s till the late 1970s. So it was far removed from being a trade union federation of the type normally found in the so-called west.

British left

Obediently, reflecting British imperial interests, mainstream Labourism has traditionally taken a positive attitude towards Zionism. As already noted, Poale Zion affiliated in 1920. And successive Labour conferences voted in favour of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Labour tops boasted of the Israeli Labor Party being its fraternal organisation and maintained the closest contacts. Simultaneously, they condescendingly spoke out against Arab feudalism, backwardness and the influence of Nazi ideas.

As for the ‘official’ CPGB in the late 1940s, it temporarily abandoned its historic hostility to Zionism. The CPGB formed a National Jewish Committee, which supported Jewish migration into Palestine and land purchases. Stalin, myopically, saw nothing more than a chance to weaken the influence of a declining British imperialism in the Middle East by supporting Zionism as a ‘liberation movement’ ... including by supplying Czech arms.

Hence, toadyingly, in 1948, the ‘official’ CPGB wholeheartedly welcomed the establishment of Israel, greeting the state’s foundation as “a big step toward fulfilment of self-determination of the peoples of Palestine” and “a great sign of the times”.³⁹ After 2,000 years of supposed *uninterrupted* persecution, the Jewish people had liberated themselves at last. In parliament its MPs, Willie Gallacher and Phil Piratin, sponsored an early day motion condemning the Arab states for their 1948 intervention in Palestine, urging the Labour government to recognise Israel and demanding an immediate end to military aid for Arab states. Ethnic cleansing, the first nakba, did not rate a mention.

On the Labour left Edward Short, Jennie Lee and Tony Benn were proud to be listed amongst the Labour Friends of Israel. They routinely cited the kibbutz as a brave socialist experiment. Eric Heffer even defended Israel’s continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after 1967 on the grounds that Israel was “the only genuine democratic and socialist-oriented state in the Middle East”.⁴⁰

Next to nothing of that left now remains. Today Israel counts amongst

those countries dominated by the right and far right, and is therefore regarded as an abomination by those who regard themselves in the least bit progressive. True, there is still a pro-Zionist ‘left’. But it is, thankfully, marginal and widely despised: the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty comes to mind, so does the CPB’s resident Zionist, Mary Davis, and her grotesque ‘Anti-Semitism awareness courses’ (as if the *Morning Star*’s CPB has an anti-Semitism problem, when, in actual fact, it has a pro-Zionism problem).

Does this mean that the left has arrived at a correct programmatic orientation, when it comes to Israel-Palestine? Hardly - instead we are presented with a range of positions, all of which are far from adequate.

Take the already mentioned AWL and the *Morning Star*’s CPB. Essentially their two-state ‘solution’ echoes the PLO, Fatah, the Israeli Democrats ... and the international mainstream liberal consensus. On the left, it amounts to economic Zionism. A little Israel - an Israel returned to its pre-1967 borders - is expected to live peacefully alongside a West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestine. Except, of course, it won’t.

For appearances sake, till Trump, US administrations likewise promoted this touching picture of the attack dog lying down with the lamb. But, in practice, the US has backed Israeli aggression to the hilt. The same goes for its allies, such as the UK, Germany and Italy. All cite the ‘right of Israel to exist and defend itself’. So there has been no repetition of the early 1990s, when apartheid in South Africa was negotiated away in a US-sponsored deal, which gave black citizens the vote in return for the ANC leaving capitalist big business intact.

But in Israel-Palestine there is no overwhelming oppressed national majority. There is no threat of a revolutionary explosion. The odds are completely stacked in Israel’s favour. That is why Hamas resorted to a desperate suicide mission and the PLO and Fatah are reduced to impotent verbal gestures, pathetic diplomatic pleading and effective collaboration with the Israeli occupiers. Recognising this, the likes of the AWL, CPB ... and various Labour left odds and sods clutch at anti-democratic liberal protests in Israel and peaceniks such as Standing Together ... that and common economic struggles, which are supposed to weld together Hebrew and Arab workers into a lever for social change.

In fact, Zionism acts to keep workers inside Israel structurally divided. That means legal, political and material privileges for Israeli-Jewish workers, privileges they will hang onto for dear life ... unless there is something much better on offer (Israeli-Jewish workers, especially those at the bottom end of the labour market, have no wish to compete with Arab-Israeli/Palestinian worst paid labour as *equals*, that is for sure).

As a justification for the two-state solution we are assured that an Israel-Palestine rapprochement would provide the solid, democratic foundations, from where alone the struggle for socialism can begin. In other words, their two-state solution is based on a combination of naive wishful thinking and mechanical, stagist, reasoning. Note, trade union politics - ie, struggles over wages and conditions - are *always* cut short by the high politics of war, security, national privilege, etc. There have been no Histadrut strikes demanding equal civil rights for Palestinians, a withdrawal from the West Bank or an end to the genocide in Gaza. Nor should any such development be expected within the narrow confines of today’s circumstances.

Hannah Sell’s Socialist Party in England and Wales offers a ‘socialist’ version of the two-state solution. It

calls for a ‘socialist’ Israel alongside a ‘socialist’ West Bank-Gaza Strip Palestine. Israel, it should be noted, is treated as a ‘normal’ country: the idea of it remaining a “settler state” is dismissed out of hand.⁴¹ That despite its immediate historic origins, the second class status of Israeli Arabs and the remorseless announcements of yet more Jewish settler outposts on the West Bank - the latest and most controversial being the E1 project located to the east of Jerusalem, which would effectively cut the West Bank in two, separate Ramallah from Bethlehem, isolate east Jerusalem and further fragment the area managed by the Palestinian Authority.

Anyway, why on earth two such *socialist* states would remain separate, especially given the substantial population crossover, is a complete mystery. No less to the point, the means of achieving such an outcome relies almost entirely on trade union politics, which by their very nature are sectional and confined to the relationship between sellers and buyers of the labour-power commodity. Hence trade union politics *as* trade union politics does little more than *reproduce* the division of the working class. On the one side, nationally privileged labour aristocrats and, on the other, a nationally oppressed underclass.

Then there is the left version of the *old* PLO single Palestine state ‘solution’, the SWP being the quintessential example (but, unleashing a floodtide of media-amplified accusations, it was, of course, recently adopted by the Green Party in England and Wales at its October 2-4 2026 Brighton conference). Ignoring the history, power, connections and wishes of the Israeli-Jewish population, the SWP calls for the abolition, the dismantling of Israel and in its place “one secular, democratic [capitalist - JC] state built on the principle of equal rights for all citizens, including Israeli Jews”.⁴²

It amounts to a shibboleth. The SWP has long ago given up trying to seriously think through what is and what is not a viable strategy in Israel-Palestine.⁴³ What it is primarily interested in nowadays - especially post-October 7 - is posturing. The SWP strives might and main to present itself to the mass pro-Palestine demonstrations, not least its student contingents, as the most militant, most implacable opponent of everything Israeli - and thereby sell a few more papers and gain a few more fleeting recruits. Politically, though, the result amounts to tailing Hamas.

Needless to say then, the Israeli-Jewish working class is deemed to be entirely incapable of playing any positive role. Israeli Jews, most of whom consider themselves secular, will paradoxically be allowed individual religious freedom, but not collective national rights under the single-Palestine solution. Israeli Jews, as noted above, are often defined away as a non-nation by the economic left, but, even when it is admitted that they do constitute a nation, they are classified as an oppressive, counterrevolutionary one, which should thereby be denied the right to self-determination, presumably in perpetuity.

That their ‘solution’ would transform the Israeli-Jewish population into an oppressed nationality never seems to occur. So, for example, Israeli-Jews would have “language rights, freedom of worship and the right to their own culture, but political rights? No.”⁴⁴ Of course, a nation threatened with a denial of political and national rights is likely to fight tooth and claw against any such outcome.

Objectively, though, the balance of forces is violently against a single-capitalist-state ‘solution’. There are some 7.2 million Israeli Jews

(settlements included). About 10-11 million Palestinians worldwide; but only 6-7 million of them live in Israel, the occupied territories, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. It is fair to say, then, that any projected single Palestinian state would include roughly equivalent numbers of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Assuming, that is, no forcible movement of peoples. No attempt to drive the Israeli Jews into the sea. No closure of refugee camps and dumping of Palestinians over to the west side of the Jordan river. No round-up and expulsion of Palestinian workers in Saudi Arabia, etc. Therefore what is being proposed is a ‘unity’ where one half of the population gets no say in matters - impractical and, in strategic terms, really dumb.

After all, the Israeli-Jewish working class has everything to lose and nothing to gain from such a single-capitalist-state ‘solution’ that is more or less guaranteed to be neither secular nor democratic. They are, therefore, more than likely to resist any such outcome with all their strength. The whole of the 20th century since 1933, but especially the 1943-45 holocaust, tells us that. Without military conquest - a highly unlikely and in and of itself an unwelcome outcome - the immediate demand for a single-state ‘solution’ is entirely illusory. Translated into the ‘Palestine shall be free from the river to the sea’ slogan, it goes down well on street demonstrations, but offers zilch in terms of bringing about a rapprochement between the two peoples in Israel-Palestine and advancing common working class interests.

The call for a single Palestinian state “may seem completely utopian”, once owned up the SWP’s Alex Callinicos. He also correctly stated that there is “very clear evidence that the two-state solution cannot work”. Crucially, there exists, he says, the “massive imbalance of power between the two sides. Israel is one of the greatest military powers in the world, backed and subsidised by the US.”⁴⁵ Right again.

Hence, it is pertinent to ask exactly who is going to establish the single Palestinian state. After all, according to comrade Callinicos himself, the Palestinians are incapable of achieving any kind of viable state alongside Israel by their efforts alone. How then can we expect them to establish a single state against the wishes of the global US hegemon and the vast majority of 7.2 million Israeli-Jews? Perhaps what the SWP therefore envisages as its agent of change is the so-called Axis of Resistance - what is today a much reduced combination of Lebanon’s Hezbollah, Hamas, Yemen’s Houthis and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the SWP imagination the Axis could, not unreasonably, be joined by Muslim Brotherhood governments in Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

An anti-working class agency, if ever there was one. However, such a pan-Islamic alliance (leave aside the Shia and Sunni divisions) could, conceivably, defeat Israel, as Saladin’s forces defeated the *outremer*, crusader, kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187. But that would, though, hardly produce a *secular* Palestinian state. Nor would it produce a *democratic* Palestinian state.

True, if such an unlikely combination were to come together - and, just as unlikely, achieve military victory over Israel - it might lead to a mass exodus of Jews (to who knows where). But, if that did not happen, the Jewish-Israeli population would have to be subject to extraordinarily harsh measures to crush their inevitable resistance. The poles of national oppression would, yes, thereby be reversed. But, we are told, what does that matter? It would, be ‘national liberation’ via the destruction of the settler-colony ... and from the (nuclear?) ashes, hopefully some

SUPPLEMENT

kind of ‘socialism’ would arise. Not something any genuine Marxist would care to countenance.

Though it might be an inconvenient truth, no *democratic* solution can be won without the consent of Israeli Jews - that is, a clearly expressed majority of them. Those Humpty Dumpties who claim otherwise are coining a contranym, whereby words become their opposite. Democracy is divorced from basic democratic rights. - it becomes a *denial* of basic democratic rights.

Yet the fact is, despite the warnings, pained outrage and courage of Israeli-Jewish socialists, anti-Zionists and pacifists, the Israeli-Jewish population consistently - often overwhelmingly - supports the wars of their elected politicians and IDF generals, irrespective of the hatred of Israel that this inevitably engenders.

Why? Israel is a colonial-settler state and all such states face a fundamental problem. What to do with the people whose land has been robbed? With the wars of 1947-49 and 1967, well over a million Palestinians fled or were driven out. Palestinians in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank therefore constitute ‘unfinished business’.

Both the Palestinian enemy within and the Palestinian enemy without engender a permanent state of insecurity. Israeli Jews know they are resented, know they are hated. When it comes to worst-paid labour, the Palestinians willingly undercut them. Then there are the Knesset votes for ‘official communists’ and Islamists, the Hamas October 7 prison breakout, the Hezbollah rockets and Iran’s ‘race’ to acquire nuclear-weapon capability. Understandably, the Israeli-Jewish population feels under constant threat and therefore - insecure, frightened, vengeful, maddened - willingly supports, urges on Israeli aggression, oppression and even genocide. The vain hope is to crush or finally remove all such threats and dangers. An oppressor’s peace.

Does it follow that Israelis cannot make a *democratic* peace with Palestinians? That any Israeli settlement with the Palestinians is bound to be a sham? There can certainly be no *democratic* peace with Israel as a *Zionist* state - any more than there can be with an *Islamic* Palestine.

Zionism is, arguably, a nationalism *sui generis*. While it now boasts a homeland, Zionism claims purchase over the loyalty of all Jews, even though the majority of the people-religion are not Israeli and do not speak everyday Hebrew (around 40% of the world’s Jewish population lives in the US, roughly the same as in Israel). No less to the point, the Zionist state is committed to denying elementary rights to a good portion of the population it rules over (ie, the Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories).

Nevertheless, the Israeli-Jewish people, the Hebrew-speaking nation, is a real, living entity and cannot be dismissed or discounted just because Israel began as and continues to be a settler colonial state. Israel emerged out of the last phase of the British empire, in the midst of a terroristic civil war and unforgivable crimes that no-one should forget. That said, there is no reason for refusing to recognise the definite, historically constituted Hebrew nation which took state form with the May 14 1948 declaration of Israeli independence.

And since then millions of Jews have migrated to Israel, learnt Hebrew, intermarried, had children, assimilated, and made and remade the Israeli-Jewish nation. Today some 80% are sabras - Israeli born - and mostly second or third generation.⁴⁶ Hence, the Israeli-Jewish nation not only inhabits a common territory and shares a common language: it is historically constituted.

Of course, most, if not all, of the

world’s states came into existence by way of terrible oppression. But, while fully taking into account history, any consistently democratic programme must be squarely based on contemporary realities - crucially human facts on the ground. Abolition of *Zionist* Israel, legal equality for all, secularism, halting expansionism and withdrawing from the occupied territories are basic (minimum) programmatic demands. None of that, however, should be taken as synonymous with an eviscerating reconstitution of the pre-1948 situation. One might just as well call for the abolition of the US, Canada, Australia, etc, and a return of lands to the enfeebled remnants of the aboriginal populations.

The only realistic, progressive and humane programme must be based on a mutual recognition by both Palestinians and Israeli Jews of each other’s national rights. Needless to say, it would be an excellent thing if both nations *chose* to happily live side by side or, even better, to slowly merge together into a single nation. No rational human being would want to oppose any such outcome. The question is, though, how to arrive at such a happy outcome? Given where we are situated today, our discussion must necessarily turn again to the question of agency.

Arab nation

No democratic solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict can be achieved in isolation. Objective circumstances simply do not permit it. That is as certain as anything can be in this uncertain world.

By themselves the Palestinians - debilitatingly split between Hamas and Fatah - palpably lack the ability to achieve anything beyond abject surrender or hopeless resistance. Certainly not a single Palestinian state, where Israeli Jews have ‘full’ religious rights, but no national rights. There is, however, a way to cut through the Gordian knot: widen the strategic front. There are nearly 300 million Arabs in a contiguous territory that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean, across north Africa, down the Nile to north Sudan, and all the way to the Persian Gulf and up to the Caspian Sea.

Though studded here and there with national minorities - Kurds, Assyrians, Turks, Armenians, Berbers, etc - there is a definite Arab or Arabised community. Despite being separated into 25 different states and divided by religion and religious sect - Sunni, Shi’ite, Alaouite, Ismaili, Druze, Orthodox Christian, Catholic Christian, Maronite, Nestorian, etc - they share a living bond of pan-Arab consciousness, born not only of a common language, but of a closely related history.

Arabs are binational. There are Moroccans, Yemenis, Egyptians, Jordanians, etc. But there is also a wider Arab identity, which has its origins going back to the Muslim conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries. The best known candidate for Arab unifier was Egypt’s president (1954-70), Gamal Abdel Nasser. This uncrowned Bonaparte led the Free Officers’ revolution in 1952, which overthrew the pro-British monarchy of Farouk I. Nasser then oversaw a radical agrarian reform programme, nationalised the Suez canal, allied Egypt with the Soviet Union and put his country on the course of state-capitalist development. This went hand-in-hand with crushing both the Muslim Brotherhood and the working class movement.

Nasser called it ‘Arab socialism’. Especially with his success in the 1956 Suez crisis - an Israeli invasion followed by a pre-planned joint French and British intervention and then an unexpected American

veto - Nasser’s popularity soared throughout the Arab world. Pro-Nasser Arab socialist parties, groups and conspiracies were sponsored or established themselves. His name became almost synonymous with pan-Arabism.

Nasser demanded that natural resources be used for the benefit of all Arabs - hugely popular with those below. Everyone knew he meant oil. Of course, the house of Saud instantly became an implacable enemy. Yet because of mass pressure the Ba’athist authorities in Syria sought a merger. Despite the repression suffered by their co-thinkers in Egypt, the ‘official communists’ and the Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood likewise favoured unity.

The United Arab Republic was formed on February 1 1958. Nasser was appointed president and Cairo became the capital. Yet the UAR proved fleeting. Syrian capitalists did not gain access to the Egyptian market and Egyptian administrative personnel were viewed by Syrian officers, bureaucrats and top politicians as acting like colonial rulers. The union ignominiously collapsed in 1961. Opposition came from the Damascus street. However, from then onwards the UAR became a hollow pretence. It united no other country apart from Egypt.

The 1967 Six Day War with Israel proved to be the final straw for Nasserism. Israel’s blitzkrieg destroyed the air forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the ground and by the end of hostilities Israel occupied yet more Arab land. Nasser was humiliated and died soon afterwards a broken man.

Evidently, however, Arab reunification remains a burning, but unfulfilled, task. The fact that Nasser’s short-lived UAR saw the light of day is testimony to mass support for Arab unity. No less to the point, what was a potent sentiment in the 1950s and well into the 1970s needs to be revived in the 21st century and given a new democratic and class content.

So we are not talking about reviving Nasserism. Nor are we talking about something akin to the pan-Slavism which excused so many of the wars and intrigues of the late Russian empire. No, communists need to take the lead in the fight for pan-Arab unity - as Marx and Engels and their comrades in the Communist League did in the fight for German unity. Such a fight, is, of course, inseparable from the task of building a mass Communist Party - first in each Arab country and then throughout the Arab world. A Communist Party of Arabia.

What of reconciliation between Hebrews and the Palestinians? That can only happen in the context of sweeping away Iran’s Shi’ite theocracy, the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon’s sectarian warlord plutocracy, Egypt’s military bureaucratic regime, the House of Saud, the petty Gulf sheikdoms, and establishing working class rule throughout the Middle East. Israel could be offered federal status, with the confident expectation that such an invitation would receive a positive mass response.⁴⁷

Hence, the road to a united working class in Palestine passes through Amman, it passes through Tehran, it passes through Beirut, it passes through Cairo and it passes through Riyadh.⁴⁸

What can be done?

Here in Britain we should certainly keep marching. Solidarity with Palestinians, especially, of course, those in Gaza, is rightly joined with the ‘Hands off Iran’ slogan. More must be done, though. Workers at airports and ports can be won to refuse to handle goods, especially arms, headed for Israel. Such agitation would be more

than timely. Expecting workers at Rolls Royce, BAE Systems or Leonardo to strike and maybe put themselves out of a much needed job is an altogether bigger ask. Moralistic attacks on ordinary workers should be avoided at all cost. However, despite remaining in the realms of the symbolic, it is quite right to demand that the UK government rescind all export licences for weapons, or weapons parts, going to Israel.

Andy Burnham and Ed Miliband tut-tut over the bad behaviour of the attack dog, but do absolutely nothing when it comes to its master. Maintaining good relations with the US hegemon matters infinitely more than Palestinians facing ethnic cleansing and genocide.

We must openly declare for the defeat of our ‘own’ side: that is, Israel, its US sponsor and its UK and other such enablers. What that poses is going beyond the ‘strike and street’ politics of protest doggedly pursued by the SWP, SPEW, RCP and the other confessional sects. We need to embrace the politics of power.

Jeremy Corbyn’s Your Party could perhaps have organised the pro-Palestine movement into a viable mass party. But bureaucratic control-freakery, a badly coordinated left and the continued attachment to Labourism effectively killed any potential it might have had. Today it is as good as useless. The same goes for George Galloway’s stillborn Workers Party of Britain and Zack Polanski’s roaraway Green Party. Such organisations are superficially committed to radical change, but upon closer examination all they promise is tinkering reform within the system.

Corbyn calls for the end of the arms trade with Israel, but dares not call himself anti-Zionist. He does not want to upset racists. Though his YP is officially committed to socialism, actually that amounts to nothing more than a peaceful, kinder, more caring version of capitalism. There is no thought, no plan, of abolishing the system of wage-slavery. As for the WPB, it does not even propose to abolish the monarchy. Instead it calls for a referendum. Galloway says he would vote for princess Anne to be president!⁴⁹ As for the GPEW, it supports Nato and its war in Ukraine, and dreams of being a well-rewarded coalition partner in a *capitalist* government.

So the effective role of these and similar outfits is to reinforce ideological illusions ... and thereby ultimately serve capitalism. No, what is needed is a principled, mass Communist Party. Only such a party, organised on an international scale, can lead the working class to state power and put an end to the global capitalist system of greed, imperialist exploitation ... and war ●

Notes

1. www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israels-ongoing-truce-violations-kill-5-in-gaza-strip/4076745https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israels-ongoing-truce-violations-kill-5-in-gaza-strip/4076745.
2. www.un.org/unispal/document/report-gaza-strip-rapid-damage-20apr26.
3. www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(25)00522-4/fulltext.
4. www.972mag.com/palestinian-children-prisoners-israeli-jail.
5. www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-31/biblical-story-amalek-south-africa-icj-genocide-case-israel/103403552.
6. Deuteronomy xxv:19. Also 1 Samuel xv:3. The passage reads: “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”
7. See www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/South-Africa-v-Israel.pdf.
8. www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/1948-convention.
9. www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/9/28/uk-pledges-tougher-stance-on-israeli-actions-in-gaza-west-bank.
10. www.atlanticcouncil.org/dispatches/israel-and-the-new-reality-of-buffer-zones.
11. In order: Sophie Squire, ‘Six months of slaughter, six months of resistance’ *Socialist Worker* April 3 2024; Ofer Cassif of the

‘official communist’ Hadash party in Israel; and US ‘realist’, John Mearsheimer *Al Jazeera* January 24 2025.
12. www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/28/what-has-the-report-into-israeli-military-failures-on-october-7-said.
13. www.eurasiareview.com/15022024-did-israel-deliberately-ignore-warnings-of-an-attack-by-hamas-to-enable-them-to-destroy-gaza-oped.
14. Hamas *Our narrative ... Operation al-Aqsa Flood* p8.
15. *The Jerusalem Post* June 17 2025.
16. *Haaretz* June 3 2019.
17. “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, the Kadomites, the Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaims, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and the Jebusites” (*Genesis* xv, 18-1).
18. www.jpr.org.uk/insights/israels-jewish-demography-changing-and-it-so-diasporas.
19. I Pappé, ‘The collapse of Zionism’ *New Left Review* June 21 2024.
20. *The Jewish Chronicle* January 6 2025.
21. www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees.
22. *The Times of Israel* October 8 2023.
23. See A Ben-Zvi *Decade of transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the origins of the American-Israeli alliance* New York NY 1998.
24. N Chomsky *The fateful triangle: the United States, Israel and the Palestinians* London 1983, p43.
25. www.inss.org.il/publication/centcom-5-years.
26. www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts.
27. www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/israel-strategic-asset-united-states-0.
28. J Conrad, ‘Zionist imperatives and the Arab solution’ *Weekly Worker* January 22 2009: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/753/zionist-imperatives-and-the-arab-solution.
29. H Clinton, ‘America’s Pacific century’ *Foreign Policy* November 2011.
30. H Bresheeth-Zabner *An army like no other: how the Israeli Defence Force made a nation* London 2020, p13.
31. The thesis of the Jewish-Israel working class being a labour aristocracy is closely associated with Maxime Rodinson. See his *Israel: a colonial settler state?* New York NY 1973.
32. See M Macnair (intro) *Karl Kautsky: on colonialism* London 2013.
33. M Machover, ‘Colonialism and the natives’ *Weekly Worker* December 17 2015: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1087/colonialism-and-the-natives.
34. www.facebook.com/PeterTatchell/posts/the-green-party-conference-motion-on-palestine-demands-that-israel-is-replaced-b/1605812897669445.
35. www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/25282/pg25282-images.html.
36. www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/mideast/agedict/ch02.htm#top.
37. M Shalev *The labour movement in Israel: ideology and political economy* Westview CO 1996, p1.
38. R Storrs *Orientations* London 1937, p405. Sir Ronald Storrs served as British military governor of Jerusalem in 1917.
39. *Daily Worker* May 15 1948.
40. E Heffer, ‘Why Labour should support Israel’ *Labour looks at Israel: 1967-1971* London 1971, p31.
41. J Horton *Socialism Today* February 2 2024.
42. SWP pamphlet: *Palestine, resistance, revolution and the struggle for freedom* London 2023, p28.
43. Eg, the SWP’s co-thinker in Germany, Ramsis Kilani, comes out with the bog-standard “strikes and mass mobilisations” and “workers developing their own capability for revolutionary self-governance” catchphrases. But, though he denounces “Stalinist conceptions of a revolution by ‘stages’”, that is actually what he advocates (R Kilani ‘Strategies for liberation: old and new arguments in the Palestinian left’ *International Socialism* No183, Summer 2024). Incidentally, Die Linke, Germany’s so-called ‘left’ party, disgracefully expelled the comrade on entirely bogus charges of “anti-Semitism” in December 2024. Anne Alexander, the SWP’s Middle East expert, confirms the stagism, when she writes of her perspectives for Palestine having “two aspects”: “The first would be [an altogether improbable - JC] revolution inside Palestine, led by Palestinians, for a single democratic and secular state, achieved through the dismantling of the whole social and political system of apartheid by a movement from below”. The second aspect being “a revolutionary process outside Palestine” (A Alexander ‘Palestine: between permanent war and permanent revolution’ *International Socialism* No181, Winter 2023). Nowhere does she mention ‘socialism’, ‘working class state power’ or ‘social revolution’ ... or even words to that effect.
44. Tony Greenstein, *Letters Weekly Worker* June 27 2024.
45. *Socialist Worker* August 5 2006.
46. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabra_(person)#cite_note-5.
47. A perspective advanced by Jabra Nicola and Moshé Machover in June 1969. See M Machover *Israelis and Palestinians: conflict and resolution* Chicago IL 2012, pp15-25.
48. To paraphrase first PFLP general secretary George Habash and, before him, first PLO chair Ahmad Shukeiri (see JT Buck *The decline of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* Hampshire College MA 2013, p4).
49. *The Daily Telegraph* June 19 2024.